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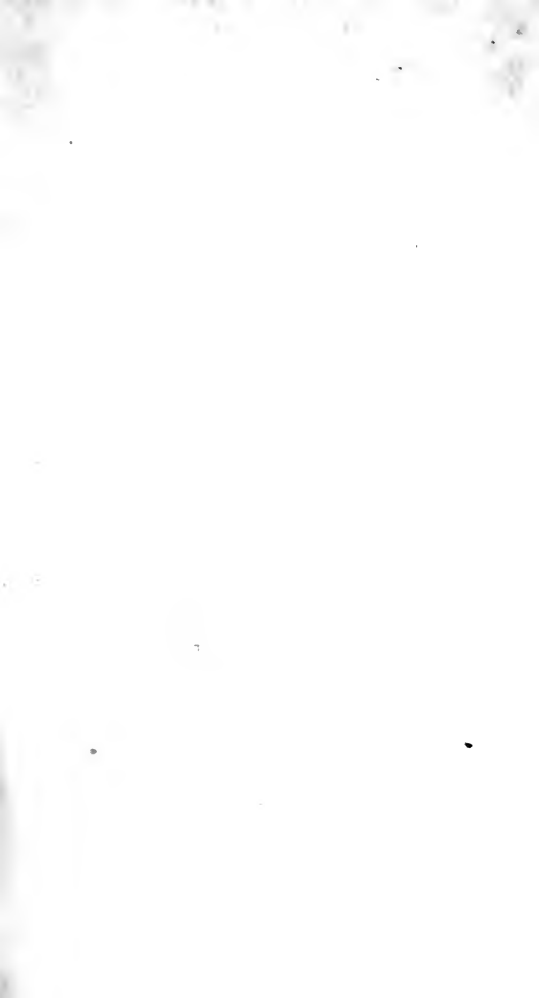
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See the whole in the play.

Thornthwaite, J.

MR. FARREN as ORESTES.

*O Madam, tis done; your orders are obey'd:
The Tyrant lies expiring at the altar.*

London: Printed for J. Smith, British Library, Strand Aug 29 1791.

THE
DISTREST MOTHER.

A
TRAGEDY.

TRANSLATED BY
AMBROSE PHILIPS,
FROM THE ANDROMAQUE OF RACINE.

ADAPTED FOR
THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,
AS PERFORMED AT THE
THEATRES-ROYAL,
DRURY-LANE, AND COVENT-GARDEN.

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOKS,
By Permission of the Managers.

"The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas, are omitted in the Representation."

LONDON:

Printed for the Proprietors, under the Direction of
JOHN BELL, British Library, STRAND,
Bookseller to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.



TO
HER GRACE
THE
DUTCHESS OF MONTAGUE.

MADAM,

THIS tragedy, which I do myself the honour to dedicate to your Grace, is formed upon an original, which passes for the most finished piece, in this kind of writing, that has ever been produced in the French language. The principal action and main distress of the play is of such a nature, as seems more immediately to claim the patronage of a lady: And, when I consider the great and shining characters of antiquity, that are celebrated in it, I am naturally directed to inscribe it to a person, whose illustrious father has, by a long series of glorious actions, (for the service of his country, and in defence of the liberties of Europe,) not only surpassed the generals of his own time, but equalled the greatest heroes of former ages. The name of Hector could not be more terrible among the Greeks, than that of the duke of Marlborough has been to the French.

The refined taste you are known to have in all entertainments for the diversion of the public, and the

peculiar life and ornament your presence gives to all assemblies, was no small motive to determine me in the choice of my patroness. The charms that shine out in the person of your Grace, may convince every one, that there is nothing unnatural in the power which is ascribed to the beauty of Andromache.

The strict regard I have had to decency and good manners throughout this work, is the greatest merit I pretend to plead in favour of my presumption; and is, I am sensible, the only argument that can recommend it most effectually to your protection.

I am,

with the greatest respect,

Madam,

your Grace's most humble

and most obedient servant.

AMBROSE PHILIPS.

THE
DISTREST MOTHER

Is a translation by AMBROSE PHILIPS from the ANDROMAQUE of the great French dramatic poet RACINE. It was acted originally at Drury-Lane Theatre, and first printed in 1712.

To those who confine their admiration to the strong fabrics of our dramatists of the golden age of English poesy, the beginning of the seventeenth century, the prolixity of harangue, and the tedious progression of the action, characteristic of the French drama, are not likely to pass without their usual reprobation. Yet many fine touches of nature considerably enliven the slumber of the stage, and much flow and facility of expression gives to the conveyance of elegant sentiments the dress they best delight to adopt.

The taste of ADDISON seems considerably to have fluctuated.—He naturally, it may be presumed from the selections in the Spectator, loved the gorgeous grandeur of SHAKSPERE, and the sublime and profound delineations of Milton,—but he deferred too much to the predominant authorities of the French critics. BOILEAU hurried him into a stigma of the Tuscan muse, which even the fairer critics of our

own day are scarcely able to supplant—and people talk of the *tinsel* of TORQUATO TASSO, because ADDISON had seconded the ungrounded censure of BOILEAU. It too frequently happens, that, without the trouble of thought, the deliberation of decision, the herd of smatterers in letters follow the critic BELLWEATHER, even when he tinkles them from their proper bounds.

ADDISON found this play perfectly consonant with the axioms of his French dogmatizers, and the Spectators were filled with its praises. PHILIPS it was also his pleasure to lift into a rivalry with POPE; and the composition of the MARIAMNE of FENTON, the original author, never wrested such vehemence of praise as the *translation* of PHILIPS from the *original* of RACINE.

I recollect to have seen this piece performed with the powerful support of Mrs. CRAWFORD and Mrs. YATES, and, even then, small was the effect produced upon the heart—The scenes are too cold and declamatory—and the personages are considerable sufferers, by being above our pity and superior to our sympathy.

PREFACE.

IN all the works of genius and invention, whether in verse or prose, there are in general but three manners of style; the one sublime and full of majesty; the other simple, natural, and easy; and the third, swelling, forced, and unnatural. An injudicious affectation and sublimity is what has betrayed a great many authors into the latter; not considering that real greatness in writing, as well as in manners, consists in an unaffected simplicity. The true sublime does not lie in strained metaphors and the pomp of words, but rises out of noble sentiments and strong images of nature; which will always appear the more conspicuous, when the language does not swell to hide and overshadow them.

These are the considerations that have induced me to write this tragedy in a style very different from what has been usually practised amongst us in poems of this nature. I have had the advantage to copy after a very great master, whose writings are deservedly admired in all parts of Europe, and whose excellencies are too well known to the men of letters in this nation, to stand in need of any farther discovery of them here. If I have been able to keep up to the beauties of Monsieur Racine in my attempts, and to do him no prejudice in the liberties I have taken frequently to vary from so great a poet, I shall have no reason to be dissatisfied with the labour it has cost me to bring the completest of his works upon the English stage.

I shall trouble my reader no farther, than to give him some short hints relating to this play, from the preface of the French

author. The following lines of Virgil mark out the scene, the action, and the four principal actors in this tragedy, together with their distinct characters; excepting that of Hermione, whose rage and jealousy is sufficiently painted in the *Andromache* of Euripides.

*Littoraque Epiri legimus, portuque subimus
Cbaonio, et celsam Buthroti ascendimus urbem—
Solemnes tum forte dapés, et tristia dona
Libabat cineri Andromache, manesque vocabat
Hectoreum ad tumulum, viridi quem cespite inanem,
Et geminas, causam lacrymis, sacraverat aras—
Dejecit vultum, et demissa voce locuta est :
O felix una ante alias Priameia virgo,
Hostilem ad tumulum, Trojæ sub mœnibus altis
Jussa mori ! quæ sortitus non pertulit ullos,
Nec victoris heri tetigit captiva cubile.
Nos patriâ incensâ, diversa per æquora vectæ,
Stirpis Achilleæ fastus, juvenemque superbum,
Servitio enixæ tulimus, qui deinde secutus
Ledaam Hermionem, Lacedæmoniosque hymenæos—
Ast illum ereptæ magno inflammatus amore
Conjugis, et scelerum Furiis agitatus Orestes
Excipit incautum patriasque obtruncat ad aras.*

VIRG. ÆN. Lib. iii.

The great concern of *Andromache*, in the Greek poet, is for the life of Molossus, a son she had by Pyrrhus. But it is more conformable to the general notion we form of that princess, at this great distance of time, to represent her as the disconsolate widow of Hector, and to suppose her the mother only of Astyanax. Considered in this light, no doubt, she moves our compassion much more effectually, than she could be imagined to do in any distress for a son by a second husband.

In order to bring about this beautiful incident, so necessary to heighten in *Andromache* the character of a tender mother, an affectionate wife, and a widow full of veneration for the memory of her deceased husband, the life of *Astyanax* is indeed a little prolonged beyond the term fixed to it by the general consent of the ancient authors. But so long as there is nothing improbable in the supposition, a judicious critic will always be pleased when he finds a matter of fact (especially so far removed in the dark and fabulous ages) falsified, for the embellishment of a whole poem.

PROLOGUE.

WRITTEN BY MR. STEELE.

*SINCE fancy by itself is loose and vain,
The wise, by rules, that airy power restrain :
They think those writers mad, who at their ease
Convey this house and audience where they please :
Who Nature's stated distances confound,
And make this spot all soils the sun goes round :
'Tis nothing, when a fancy'd scene's in view,
To skip from Covent-Garden to Peru.*

*But Shakspeare's self transgress'd ; and shall each elf,
Each pigmy genius, quote great Shakspeare's self !
What critic dares prescribe what's just and fit,
Or mark out limits for such boundless wit !
Shakspeare could travel thro' earth, sea, and air,
And paint out all the powers and wonders there.
In barren deserts he makes Nature smile,
And gives us feasts in his Enchanted Isle.
Our author does his feeble force confess,
Nor dares pretend such merit to transgress ;
Does not such shining gifts of genius share,
And therefore makes propriety his care.*

*Your treat with studied decency he serves ;
Not only rules of time and place preserves,
But strives to keep his character intire,
With French correctness, and with British fire.*

*This piece, presented in a foreign tongue,
When France was glorious, and her monarch young,
An hundred times a crowded audience drew,
An hundred times repeated, still'twas new.*

*Pyrrhus provok'd, to no wild rants betray'd,
Resents his generous love so ill repay'd ;
Does like a man resent, a prince upbraid.
His sentiments disclose a royal mind,
Nor is he known a king from guards behind.*

*Injur'd Hermione demands relief ;
But not from heavy narratives of grief :
In conscious majesty her pride is shewn ;
Born to avenge her wrongs, but not bemoan.*

*Andromache—If in our author's lines,
As in the great original she shines,
Nothing but from barbarity she fears ;
Attend with silence, you'll applaud with tears.*

Dramatis Personae.

DRURY-LANE.

Men.

PYRRHUS, son of Achilles,	-	-	Mr. Palmer.
PHŒNIX, counsellor to Pyrrhus,	-	-	Mr. Packer.
ORESTES, son of Agamemnon,	-	-	Mr. Kemble.
PYLADES, friend to Orestes,	-	-	Mr. Barrymore,

Women.

ANDROMACHE, Hector's widow,	-	Miss Kemble.
CEPHISA, confidante to Andromache,	-	Miss Tidswell.
HERMIONE, daughter to Menelaus,	-	Mrs. Siddons.
CLEONE, confidante to Hermione,	-	Miss Collins.

Attendants on Pyrrhus and Orestes, &c.

COVENT-GARDEN.

Men.

PYRRHUS, son of Achilles,	-	-	Mr. Pope.
PHŒNIX, counsellor to Pyrrhus,	-	-	Mr. Macready.
ORESTES, son of Agamemnon,	-	-	Mr. Holman.
PYLADES, friend to Orestes,	-	-	Mr. Davies.

Women.

ANDROMACHE, Hector's widow,	-	Mrs. Pope.
CEPHISA, confidante to Andromache,	-	Mrs. Morton.
HERMIONE, daughter to Menelaus,	-	Miss Brunton.
CLEONE, confidante to Hermione,	-	Miss Stuart.

Attendants on Pyrrhus and Orestes, &c.

*The SCENE, a great hall in the court of Pyrrhus, at Buthrotos,
the capital city of Epirus.*



THE
DISTREST MOTHER.

ACT I. SCENE I.

*The Palace of PYRRHUS. Enter ORESTES, PYLADES,
and Attendants.*

Orestes.

O PYLADES! what's life without a friend!
At sight of thee my gloomy soul cheers up;
My hopes revive, and gladness dawns within me.
After an absence of six tedious moons,
How could I hope to find my Pylades,
My joy, my comfort, on this fatal shore?
Even in the court of Pyrrhus! in these realms,
These hated realms, so cross to all my wishes.
Oh, my brave friend! may no blind stroke of fate
Divide us more, and tear me from myself.

Pyl. O prince! O my Orestes! O my friend!—
Thus let me speak the welcome of my heart.

[Embracing.]

Since I have gain'd this unexpected meeting,

Blest be the powers who barr'd my way to Greece,
And kept me here! e'er since the unhappy day
When warring winds (Epirus full in view)
Sunder'd our barks on the loud, stormy main.

Orest. It was, indeed, a morning full of horror!

Pyl. A thousand boding cares have rack'd my soul
In your behalf. Often, with tears, I mourn'd
The fatal ills, in which your life's involv'd;
And grudg'd you dangers which I could not share.
I fear'd to what extremities the black despair
That prey'd upon your mind, might have betray'd
you,

And lest the gods, in pity to your woes,
Should hear your pray'rs, and take the life you loath'd.
But now with joy I see you!—The retinue,
And numerous followers that surround you here,
Speak better fortunes, and a mind dispos'd
To relish life.

Orest. Alas! my friend, who knows
The destiny to which I stand reserv'd!
I come in search of an inhuman fair;
And live or die, as she decrees my fate.

Pyl. You much surprise me, prince!—I thought
you cur'd
Of your unpity'd, unsuccessful passion.
Why, in Epirus, should you hope to find
Hermione less cruel, than at Sparta?
I thought her pride, and the disdainful manner
In which she treated all your constant suff'rings,
Had broke your fetters, and assur'd your freedom:

Asham'd of your repulse, and slighted vows,
 You hated her; you talk'd of her no more :
 Prince, you deceiv'd me.

Orest. I deceiv'd myself.

Do not upbraid the unhappy man, that loves thee.
 Thou know'st I never hid my passion from thee ;
 Thou saw'st it in its birth and in its progress ;
 And when at last the hoary king, her father,
 Great Menelaus, gave away his daughter,
 His lovely daughter, to the happy Pyrrhus,
 Th'avenger of his wrongs, thou saw'st my grief,
 My torture, my despair ; “ and how I dragg'd,
 “ From sea to sea, a heavy chain of woes.”
 O Pylades ! my heart has bled within me,
 To see thee, prest with sorrows not thy own,
 Still wand'ring with me like a banish'd man !
 Watchful, and anxious for thy wretched friend,
 To temper the wild transports of my mind,
 And save me from myself.

Pyl. Why thus unkind ?

Why will you envy me the pleasing task
 Of generous love, and sympathizing friendship ?

Orest. Thou miracle of truth—but hear me on.

When in the midst of my disastrous fate,
 I thought how the divine Hermione,
 Deaf to my vows, regardless of my complaints,
 Gave up herself, in all her charms, to Pyrrhus ;
 Thou may'st remember, I abhorr'd her name,
 Strove to forget her and repay her scorn.
 I made my friends; and even myself, believe

My soul was freed. Alas! I did not see,
That all the malice of my heart was love.
Triumphing thus, and yet a captive still,
In Greece I landed: and in Greece I found
The assembled princes all alarm'd with fears,
In which their common safety seem'd concern'd.
I join'd them: for I hop'd that war and glory
Might fill my mind, and take up all my thoughts:
And, that my shatter'd soul, impair'd with grief,
Once more would reassume its wonted vigour,
And ev'ry idle passion quit my breast.

Pyl. The thought was worthy Agamemnon's son.

Orest. But see the strange perverseness of my stars,
Which throws me on the rock I strove to shun!
The jealous chiefs, and all the states of Greece,
With one united voice complain of Pyrrhus;
That now forgetful of the promise giv'n,
And mindless of his godlike father's fate,
Astyanax, he nurses in his court;
Astyanax, the young, surviving hope
Of ruin'd Troy; Astyanax, descended
From a long race of kings; great Hector's son.

Pyl. A name still dreadful in the ears of Greece!
But, prince, you'll cease to wonder why the child
Lives thus protected in the court of Pyrrhus,
When you shall hear, the bright Andromache,
His lovely captive, charms him from his purpose:
The mother's beauty guards the helpless son.

Orest. Your tale confirms what I have heard; and
hence

Spring all my hopes. Since my proud rival woos
 Another partner to his throne and bed,
 Hermione may still be mine. Her father,
 The injur'd Menelaus, thinks already
 His daughter slighted, and th'intended nuptials
 Too long delay'd. I heard his loud complaints
 With secret pleasure; and was glad to find
 Th'ungrateful maid neglected in her turn,
 And all my wrongs aveng'd in her disgrace.

Pyl. Oh, may you keep your just resentments
 warm!

Orest. Resentments! Oh, my friend, too soon I
 found

They grew not out of hatred! I'm betray'd:
 I practice on myself; and fondly plot
 My own undoing. Goaded on by love,
 I canvass'd all the suffrages of Greece:
 And here I come their sworn ambassador,
 To speak their jealousies, and claim this boy.

Pyl. Pyrrhus will treat your embassy with scorn.
 Full of Achilles, his redoubted sire,
 Pyrrhus is proud, impetuous, headstrong, fierce;
 Made up of passions: Will he then be sway'd,
 And give to death the son of her he loves?

Orest. Oh, would he render up Hermione,
 And keep Astyanax, I should be blest!
 He must; he shall. Hermione is my life,
 My soul, my rapture!—I'll no longer curb
 The strong desire that hurries me to madness:
 I'll give a loose to love; I'll bear her hence;

I'll tear her from his arms ; I'll—O, ye gods !
Give me Hermione, or let me die !—
But tell me, Pylades ; how stand my hopes ?
Is Pyrrhus still enamour'd with her charms ?
Or dost thou think he'll yield me up the prize,
The dear, dear prize, which he has ravish'd from me ?

Pyl. I dare not flatter your fond hopes so far ;
The king, indeed, cold to the Spartan Princess,
Turns all his passion to Andromache,
Hector's afflicted widow. But in vain,
With interwoven love and rage, he sues
The charming captive, obstinately cruel.
Oft he alarms her for her child confin'd
Apart ; and when her tears begin to flow,
As soon he stops them, and recalls his threats.
Hermione a thousand times has seen
His ill-requited vows return to her ;
And takes his indignation all for love.
What can be gather'd from a man so various ?
He may, in the disorder of his soul,
Wed her he hates ; and punish her he loves.

Orest. But tell me how the wrong'd Hermione
Brooks her slow nuptials, and dishonour'd charms ?

Pyl. Hermione would fain be thought to scorn
Her wavering lover, and disdain his falshood ;
But, spite of all her pride and conscious beauty,
She mourns in secret her neglected charms ;
And oft has made me privy to her tears :
Still threatens to be gone ; yet still she stays ;
And sometimes sighs, and wishes for Orestes.

Orest. Ah, were those wishes from her heart, my friend.

I'd fly in transport—— [Flourish within.

Pyl. Hear!—the king approaches
To give you audience. Speak your embassy
Without reserve : urge the demands of Greece ;
And, in the name of all her kings, require,
That Hector's son be giv'n into your hands,
Pyrrhus, instead of granting what they ask,
To speed his love and win the Trojan dame,
Will make it merit to preserve her son.
But, see ; he comes.

Orest. Mean while, my Pylades,
Go, and dispose Hermione to see
Her lover, who is come thus far, to throw
Himself, in all his sorrows, at her feet.

Enter PYRRHUS, PHOENIX, and Attendants.

Before I speak the message of the Greeks,
Permit me, sir, to glory in the title
Of their ambassador ; since I behold
Troy's vanquisher, and great Achilles' son.
Nor does the son rise short of such a father :
If Hector fell by him. Troy fell by you.
But what your father never would have done,
You do. You cherish the remains of Troy ;
And by an ill-tim'd pity keep alive
The dying embers of a ten years war.
Have you so soon forgot the mighty Hector ?
The Greeks remember his high brandish'd sword,

That fill'd their states with widows and with orphans,
For which they call for vengeance on his son.

Who knows what he may one day prove? Who
knows

But he may brave us in our ports; and, fill'd
With Hector's fury, set our fleets on blaze.

You may, yourself, live to repent your mercy.

Comply, then, with the Grecians' just demands:

Satiate their vengeance, and preserve yourself.

Pyr. The Greeks are for my safety more concern'd
Than I desire. I thought your kings were met

On more important counsel. When I heard

The name of their ambassador, I hop'd

Some glorious enterprize was taking birth.

Is Agamemnon's son dispatch'd for this?

And do the Grecian chiefs, renown'd in war,

A race of heroes, join in close debate,

To plot an infant's death!—What right has Greece

To ask his life? Must I, must I alone,

Of all the scepter'd warriors, be deny'd

To treat my captive as I please? Know, prince,

When Troy lay smoking on the ground; and each

Proud victor shar'd the harvest of the war,

Andromache and this her son were mine;

Were mine by lot; and who shall wrest them from
me?

Ulysses bore away old Priam's queen;

Cassandra was your own great father's prize;

Did I concern myself in what they won?

Did I send embassies to claim their captives?

Orest. But, sir, we fear for you, and for ourselves.
Troy may again revive, and a new Hector
Rise in Astyanax. Then think betimes—

Pyr. Let dastard souls be timorously wise :
But tell them, Pyrrhus knows not how to form
Far-fancy'd ills, and dangers out of sight.

Orest. Sir, call to mind the unrivall'd strength of
Troy ;

Her walls, her bulwarks, and her gates of brass ;
Her kings, her heroes, and embattled armies !

Pyr. I call them all to mind ; and see them all
Confus'd in dust ; all mixt in one wide ruin ;
All but a child, and he in bondage held.
What vengeance can we fear from such a Troy ?
If they have sworn to extinguish Hector's race,
Why was their vow for twelve long months deferr'd ?
Why was he not in Priam's bosom slain ?
He should have fall'n among the slaughter'd heaps,
Whelm'd under Troy. His death had then been just.
“ When age and infancy, alike in vain,
“ Plead'd their weakness ; when the heat of conquest,
“ And horrors of the sight, rous'd all our rage,
“ And blindly hurrv'd us thro' scenes of death.”
My fury then was without bounds : but now,
My wrath appeas'd, must I be cruel still ?
And, deaf to all the tender calls of pity,
Like a cool murderer, bathe my hands in blood ;
An infant's blood ?—No, prince—go, bid the Greeks
Mark out some other victim ; my revenge
Has had its fill. What has escap'd from Troy
Shall not be sav'd to perish in Epirus.

Orest. I need not tell you, sir, Astyanax
 Was doom'd to death in Troy ; nor mention how
 The crafty mother sav'd her darling son :
 The Greeks do now but urge their former sentence ;
 Nor is't the boy, but Hector, they pursue ;
 The father draws their vengeance on the son :
 The father, who so oft in Grecian blood
 Has drench'd his sword ; the father, whom the Greeks
 May seek even here.—Prevent them, sir, in time.

Pyr. No ! let them come ; since I was born to wage
 Eternal wars. Let them now turn their arms
 On him, who conquer'd for them : let them come,
 And in Epirus seek another Troy.

'Twas thus they recompens'd my godlike sire ;
 Thus was Achilles thank'd. But, prince, remember,
 Their black ingratitude then cost them dear.

Orest. Shall Greece then find a rebel son in Pyrrhus ?

Pyr. Have I then conquer'd to depend on Greece ?

Orest. Hermione will sway your soul to peace,
 And mediate 'twixt her father and yourself :
 Her beauty will enforce my embassy.

Pyr. Hermione may have her charms ; and I
 May love her still, tho' not her father's slave.

I may in time give proofs, that I'm a lover ;

But never must forget, that I'm a king.

Meanwhile, sir, you may see fair Hellen's daughter ;

I know how near in blood you stand ally'd.

That done, you have my answer, prince. The
 Greeks,

No doubt, expect your quick return. [*Ex. Orest. &c.*]

Phæn. Sir, do you send your rival to the princess?

Pyr. I am told, that he has lov'd her long.

Phæn. If so,

Have you not cause to fear the smother'd flame

May kindle at her sight, and blaze a-new?

And she be brought to listen to his passion.

Pyr. Ay, let them, Phœnix, let them love their fill!

Let them go hence; let them depart together:

Together let them sail for Sparta: all my ports

Are open to them both. From what constraint,

What irksome thoughts, should I be then reliev'd!

Phæn. But, sir,—

Pyr. I shall another time good Phœnix,

Unbosom to thee all my thoughts—for, see,

Andromache appears.

Enter ANDROMACHE, and CEPHISA.

Pyr. May I, madam,

Flatter my hopes so far as to believe

You come to seek me here?

Andr. This way, sir, leads

To those apartments where you guard my son.

Since you permit me, once a day, to visit

All I have left of Hector and of Troy,

I go to weep a few sad moments with him.

I have not yet, to-day, embrac'd my child;

I have not held him in my widow'd arms.

Pyr. Ah, madam, should the threats of Greece prevail,

You'll have occasion for your tears, indeed?

Andr. Alas, what threats! What can alarm the Greeks?

There are no Trojans left!

Pyr. Their hate to Hector
Can never die: the terror of his name
Still shakes their souls; and makes them dread his son.

Pyr. A mighty honour for victorious Greece,
To fear an infant, a poor friendless child!
Who smiles in bondage: nor yet knows himself
The son of Hector, and the slave of Pyrrhus.

Pyr. Weak as he is, the Greeks demand his life;
And send no less than Agamemnon's son,
To fetch him hence.

Andr. And, sir, do you comply
With such demands?—This blow is aim'd at me:
How should the child avenge his slaughter'd sire?
But, cruel men! they will not have him live
To cheer my heavy heart, and ease my bonds.
I promis'd to myself in him a son,
In him a friend, a husband, and a father.
But I must suffer sorrow heap'd on sorrow;
And still the fatal stroke must come from you.

Pyr. Dry up those tears, I must not see you weep,
And know, I have rejected their demands.
The Greeks already threaten me with war:
But, should they arm, as once they did for Helen,
And hide the Adriatic with their fleets;
Should they prepare a second ten years siege,
And lay my towers and palaces in dust:

I am determin'd to defend your son ;
And rather die myself than give him up.
But, madam, in the midst of all these dangers,
Will you refuse me a propitious smile ?
Hated of Greece, and prest on every side,
Let me not, madam, while I fight your cause,
Let me not combat with your cruelties,
And count Andromache amongst my foes.

Andr. Consider, sir, how this will sound in Greece !
How can so great a soul betray such weakness ?
Let not men say, so generous a design
Was but the transport of a heart in love.

Pyr. Your charms will justify me to the world.

Andr. How can Andromache, a captive queen,
O'erwhelm'd with grief, a burthen to herself,
Harbour a thought of love ? Alas ! what charms
Have these unhappy eyes, by you condemn'd
To weep for ever ?—Talk of it no more.
To reverence the misfortunes of a foe ?
To succour the distrest ; to give the son
To an afflicted mother ; to repel
Confederate nations, leagu'd against his life ;
Unbrib'd by love, untterrify'd by threats,
To pity, to protect him : these are cares,
These are exploits worthy Achilles' son.

Pyr. Will your resentments, then, endure for ever !
Must Pyrrhus never be forgiven ? 'Tis true,
My sword has often reek'd in Phrygian blood,
And carried havoc through your royal kindred ;
But you, fair princess, amply have aveng'd

Old Priam's vanquish'd house ; and all the woes
I brought on them, fall short of what I suffer.
We both have suffer'd in our turns : and now
Our common foe should teach us to unite.

Andr. Where does the captive not behold a foe ?

Pyr. Forget the term of hatred ; and behold
A friend in Pyrrhus ! Give me but to hope,
I'll free your son ; I'll be a father to him :
Myself will teach him to avenge the Trojans.
I'll go in person to chastise the Greeks,
Both for your wrongs and mine. Inspir'd by you,
What would I not achieve ? Again shall Troy
Rise from its ashes : this right arm shall fix
Her seat of empire ; and your son shall reign.

Andr. Such dreams of greatness suit not my condition :

His hopes of empire perish'd with his father.
No ; thou imperial city, ancient Troy,
Thou pride of Asia, founded by the gods !
Never, Oh, never must we hope to see
Those bulwarks rise, which Hector could not guard !
Sir, all I wish for, is some quiet exile,
Where, far from Greece remov'd, and far from you,
I may conceal my son, and mourn my husband.
Your love creates me envy. Oh, return !
Return to your betroth'd Hermione.

Pyr. Why do you mock me thus ? You know, I
cannot.

You know my heart is yours : my soul hangs on you :
You take up every wish : my waking thoughts,

And nightly dreams are all employ'd on you.
'Tis true, Hermione was sent to share
My throne and bed ; and would with transport hear
The vows which you neglect.

Andr. She has no Troy,
No Hector to lament : she has not lost
A husband by your conquests. Such a husband !
(Tormenting thought !) whose death alone has made
Your sire immortal : Pyrrhus and Achilles
Are both grown great by my calamities.

Pyr. Madam, 'tis well ! 'Tis very well ! I find,
Your will must be obey'd. Imperious captive,
It shall. Henceforth I blot you from my mind :
You teach me to forget your charms ; to hate you :
For know, inhuman beauty, I have lov'd
Too well to treat you with indifference.
Think well upon it : my disorder'd soul
Wavers between th' extremes of love and rage ;
I've been too tame ; I will awake to vengeance !
The son shall answer for the mother's scorn.
The Greeks demand him : nor will I endanger
My realms, to pleasure an ungrateful woman.

Andr. Then he must die ! Alas, my son must die !
He has no friend, no succour left, beside
His mother's tears, and his own innocence.

Pyr. Go, madam ; visit this unhappy son.
The sight of him may bend your stubborn heart ;
And turn to softness your unjust disdain.
I shall once more expect your answer. Go,

And think, while you embrace the captive boy,
Think that his life depends on your resolves.

[Exit Pyrrhus, &c.

Andr. I'll go ; and in the anguish of my heart,
Weep o'er my child—If he must die, my life
Is wrapt in his ; I shall not long survive.
'Tis for his sake that I have suffer'd life,
Groan'd in captivity, and out-liv'd Hector.
Yes, my Astyanax, we'll go together !
Together to the realms of night we'll go !
There to thy ravish'd eyes thy sire I'll shew,
And point him out among the shades below.

ACT II. SCENE I.

HERMIONE and CLEONE.

Hermione.

WELL, I'll be rul'd, Cleone : I will see him ;
I have told Pylades that he may bring him ;
But trust me, were I left to my own thoughts,
I should forbid him yet.

Cleo. And why forbid him ?

Is he not, madam, still the same Orestes ?
Orestes, whose return you oft have wish'd ?
The man whose sufferings you so oft lamented,
And often prais'd his constancy and love ?

Her. That love, that constancy, so ill requited,
Upbraids me to myself ! I blush to think

How I have us'd him ; and would shun his presence.
 What will be my confusion when he sees me
 Neglected, and forsaken, like himself ?
 Will he not say, Is this the scornful maid,
 The proud Hermione, that tyranniz'd
 In Sparta's court, and triumph'd in her charms ?
 Her insolence at last is well repaid.
 I cannot bear the thought !

Cleo. You wrong yourself
 With unbecoming fears. He knows too well
 Your beauty and your worth. Your lover comes not
 To offer insults ; but to repeat his vows,
 And breathe his ardent passion at your feet.
 But, madam, what's your royal father's will ?
 What orders do your letters bring from Sparta ?

Her. His orders are, if Pyrrhus still deny
 The nuptials, and refuse to sacrifice
 This Trojan boy, I should with speed embark,
 And with their embassy return to Greece.

Cleo. What would you more ? Orestes comes in time
 To save your honour. Pyrrhus cools apace :
 Prevent his falsehood, and forsake him first.
 I know you hate him ; you have told me so.

Her. Hate him ! My injur'd honour bids me hate him.
 Th' ungrateful man, to whom I fondly gave
 My virgin heart ; the man I lov'd so dearly ;
 The man I doated on ! Oh, my Cleone !
 How is it possible I should not hate him ?

Cleo. Then give him over, madam. Quit his court ;
 And with Orestes—

Her. No! I must have time
To work up all my rage! To meditate
A parting full of horror! My revenge
Will be but too much quicken'd by the traitor.

Cleo. Do you then wait new insults, new affronts?
To draw you from your father! Then to leave you!
In his own court to leave you—for a captive!
If Pyrrhus can provoke you, he has done it.

Her. Why dost thou heighten my distress? I fear
To search out my own thoughts, and sound my heart.
Be blind to what thou seest: believe me cur'd:
Flatter my weakness; tell me I have conquer'd;
Think that my injur'd soul is set against him;
And do thy best to make me think so too.

Cleo. Why would you loiter here, then?

Her. Let us fly!

Let us begone! I leave him to his captive:
Let him go kneel, and supplicate his slave.
Let us begone!—But what if he repent?
What if the perjur'd prince again submit,
And sue for pardon? What if he renew
His former vows?—But, oh, the faithless man!
He slights me! drives me to extremities!—However,
I'll stay, Cleone, to perplex their loves;
I'll stay, till by an open breach of contract,
I make him hateful to the Greeks. Already
Their vengeance have I drawn upon the son,
Their second embassy shall claim the mother:
I will redouble all my griefs upon her!

Cleo. Ah, madam, whither does your rage transport
you?

Andromache, alas! is innocent.

A woman plung'd in sorrow ; dead to love :

And when she thinks on Pyrrhus, 'tis with horror.

Her. Would I had done so too!—He had not then

Betray'd my easy faith.—But I, alas !

Discover'd all the fondness of my soul !

I made no secret of my passion too him,

Nor thought it dangerous to be sincere :

My eyes, my tongue, my actions spoke my heart.

Cleo. Well might you speak without reserve to one

Engaged to you by solemn oaths and treaties.

Her. His ardour too was an excuse to mine :

With other eyes he saw me then!—Cleone,

Thou mayst remember, every thing conspir'd

To favour him : my father's wrongs aveng'd ;

The Greeks triumphant ; fleets of Trojan spoils ;

His mighty sire's, his own immortal fame ;

His eager love ;—all, all conspir'd against me !

—But I have done : I'll think no more of Pyrrhus.

Orestes wants not merit ; and he loves me.

My gratitude, my honour, both plead for him :

And if I've power over my own heart, 'tis his.

Cleo. Madam, he comes—

Her. Alas, I did not think

He was so near!—I wish I might not see him.

Enter ORESTES.

How am I to interpret, sir, this visit !

Is it a compliment of form, or love ?

Orest. Madam, you know my weakness. 'Tis my fate

To love unpity'd : to desire to see you ;
And still to swear each time shall be the last.
My passion breaks thro' my repeated oaths :
And every time I visit you I'm perjur'd.
Even now, I find my wounds all bleed afresh :
I blush to own it ; but I know no cure.
I call the gods to witness, I have try'd
Whatever man could do, (but try'd in vain,)
To wear you from my mind. Thro' stormy seas,
And savage climes, in a whole year of absence,
I courted dangers, and I long'd for death.

Her. Why will you, prince, indulge this mournful
tale ?

It ill becomes the ambassador of Greece
To talk of dying and of love. Remember
The kings you represent : Shall their revenge
Be disappointed by your ill-tim'd passion ?
Discharge your embassy : 'tis not Orestes
The Greeks desire should die.

Orest. My embassy
Is at an end, for Pyrrhus has refus'd
To give up Hector's son. Some hidden power
Protects the boy.

Her. Faithless, ungrateful man ! *[Aside.]*

Orest. I now prepare for Greece. But e'er I go,
Would hear my final doom pronounc'd by you—
What do I say—I do already hear it !
My doom is fixt : I read it in your eyes.

Her. Will you then still despair ? be still suspicious ?
What have I done ? Wherein have I been cruel ?

'Tis true, you find me in the court of Pyrrhus :
 But 'twas my royal father sent me hither.
 And who can tell but I have shar'd your griefs?
 Have I ne'er wept in secret? Never wish'd
 To see Orestes?

Orest. Wish'd to see Orestes!——
 Oh joy! oh ecstasy? My soul's intranc'd?
 Oh, charming princess! Oh, transcendant maid!
 My utmost wish!—Thus, thus let me express
 My boundless thanks!——I never was unhappy—
 Am I Orestes?—

Her. You are Orestes,
 The same unalter'd, generous, faithful lover:
 The prince whom I esteem; whom I lament;
 And whom I fain would teach my heart to love!

Orest. Ay, there it is!—I have but your esteem,
 While Pyrrhus has your heart!

Her. Believe me, prince,
 Were you as Pyrrhus, I should hate you!

Orest. No!——
 I should be blest! I should be lov'd as he is!—
 Yet all this while I die by your disdain,
 While he neglects your charms, and courts another.

Her. And who has told you, prince, that I'm neglected?

Has Pyrrhus said——(Oh, I shall go distracted!)
 Has Pyrrhus told you so?——Or is it you,
 Who think thus meanly of me?——Sir, perhaps,
 All do no judge like you!——

Orest. Madam, go on!

Insult me still : I'm us'd to bear your scorn.

Her. Why am I told how Pyrrhus loves or hates ?
—Go, prince, and arm the Greeks against the rebel ;
Let them lay waste his country ! raze his towns ;
Destroy his fleets ; his palaces ;—himself!—
Go, prince, and tell me then how much I love him.

Orest. To hasten his destruction, come yourself ;
And work your royal father to his ruin.

Her. Mean while he weds Andromache !

Orest. Ah, princess!

What is't I hear ?

Her. What infamy for Greece,
If he should wed a Phrygian, and a captive!

Orest. Is this your hatred, madam?—'Tis in vain
To hide your passion ; every thing betrays it :
Your looks, your speech, your anger : nay, your silence ;

Your love appears in all ; your secret flame
Breaks out the more, the more you would conceal it.

Her. Your jealousy perverts my meaning still,
And wrests each circumstance to your disquiet ;
My very hate is constru'd into fondness.

Orest. Impute my fears, if groundless, to my love.

Her. Then hear me, prince. Obedience to a father
First brought me hither ; and the same obedience
Detains me here, till Pyrrhus drive me hence,
Or my offended father shall recall me.
Tell this proud king, that Menelaus scorns

To match his daughter with a foe of Greece ;
 Bid him resign Astyanax, or me.
 If he persists to guard the hostile boy,
 Hermione embarks with you for Sparta.

[*Ex. Her. and Cleone.*]

Orest. Then is Orestes blest ! My griefs are fled !
 Fled like a dream !—Methinks I tread in air !
 “ Pyrrhus, enamour’d of his captive queen,
 “ Will thank me, if I take her rival hence :
 “ He looks not on the princess with my eyes !
 “ Surprising happiness !—Unlook’d-for joy !”
 Never let love despair !—the prize is mine !
 Be smooth, ye seas ! and ye, propitious winds,
 Breathe from Epirus to the Spartan coasts !
 I long to view the sails unfurl’d !—But, see !
 Pyrrhus approaches in an happy hour.

Enter PYRRHUS, and PHOENIX.

Pyr. I was in pain to find you, prince. My warm
 Ungovern’d temper would not let me weigh
 The importance of your embassy, and hear
 You argue for my good.——I was to blame.
 I since have pois’d your reasons ; and I thank
 My good allies : their care deserves my thanks.
 You have convinc’d me, that the weal of Greece,
 My father’s honour, and my own repose,
 Demand that Hector’s race should be destroy’d.
 I shall deliver up Astyanax ;
 And you, yourself shall bear the victim hence.

Orest. If you approve it, sir, and are content
To spill the blood of a defenceless child;
The offended Greeks, no doubt, will be pleas'd.

Pyr. Closer to strain the knot of our alliance,
I have determin'd to espouse Hermione.
You come in time to grace our nuptial rites:
In you the kings of Greece will all be present;
And you have right to personate her father,
As his ambassador, and brother's son.
Go, prince, renew your visit; tell Hermione,
To-morrow I receive her from your hands.

Orest. [*Aside.*] Oh, change of fortune! Oh, undone
Orestes! [*Exit Orestes.*

Pyr. Well, Phœnix, am I still a slave to love?
What think'st thou know? Am I myself again?

Phæn. 'Tis as it should be: this discovers Pyrrhus;
Shews all the hero. Now you are yourself!
The son, the rival of the great Achilles!
Greece will applaud you; and the world confess,
Pyrrhus has conquer'd Troy a second time!

Pyr. Nay, Phœnix, now I but begin to triumph:
I never was a conqueror 'till now!
Believe me, a whole host, a war of foes,
May sooner be subdu'd, than love. Oh, Phœnix,
What ruin have I shunn'd! The Greeks enrag'd,
Hung o'er me, like a gathering storm, and soon
Had burst in thunder on my head; while I
Abandon'd duty, empire, honour, all,
To please a thankless woman!—One kind look
Had quite undone me!

Phæn. Oh, my royal master !

The gods, in favour to you, made her cruel.

Pyr Thou saw'st with how much scorn she treat
ed me !

When I permitted her to see her son,

I hop'd it might have work'd her to my wishes.

I went to see the mournful interview,

And found her bath'd in tears, and lost in passion.

Wild with distress, a thousand times she call'd

On Hector's name : and when I spoke in comfort,

And promis'd my protection to her son,

She kiss'd the boy ; and call'd again on Hector :

“ Then, strain'd him in her arms ; and cry'd, 'Tis he !

“ 'Tis he himself ! his eyes, his every feature !

“ His very frown, and his stern look already !

“ 'Tis he : 'Tis my lov'd lord whom I embrace !”

Does she then think, that I preserve the boy

To soothe, and keep alive her flame for Hector ?

Phæn. No doubt, she does ; and thinks you favour'd
in it ;

But let her go, for an ungrateful woman !

Pyr. I know the thoughts of her proud, stubborn
heart :

Vain of her charms, and insolent in beauty,

She mocks my rage ; and when it threatens loudest,

Expects 'twill soon be humbled into love.

But we shall change our parts ; and she shall find,

I can be deaf, like her ; and steel my heart.

She's Hector's widow ; I Achilles' son !

Pyrrhus is born to hate Andromache.

Phæn. My royal master, talk of her no more;
I do not like this anger. Your Hermione
Should now engross your thoughts. 'Tis time to see
her;

'Tis time you should prepare the nuptial rites;
And not rely upon a rival's care:
It may be dangerous.

Pyr. But tell me, Phœnix,
Dost thou not think, the proud Andromache
Will be enrag'd, when I shall wed the princess?

Phæn. Why does Andromache still haunt your
thoughts?

What is't to you, be she enrag'd or pleas'd?
Let her name perish: think of her no more!

Pyr. No, Phœnix!—I have been too gentle with her,
I've check'd my wrath, and stifled my resentment:
She knows not yet to what degree I hate her.
Let us return:—I'll brave her to her face:
I'll give my anger its free course against her.
Thou shalt see, Phœnix, how I'll break her pride!

Phæn. Oh, go not, sir!—There's ruin in her eyes!
You do not know your strength: you'll fall before her,
Adore her beauty, and revive her scorn.

Pyr. That were indeed a most unmanly weakness!
Thou dost not know me, Phœnix!

Phæn. Ah, my prince!
You are still struggling in the toils of love.

Pyr. Canst thou then think I love this woman still!
One who repays my passion with disdain!
A stranger, captive, friendless and forlorn;

She and her darling son within my power ;
 His life a forfeit to the Greeks : Yet I
 Preserve her son ; would take her to my throne ;
 Would fight her battles, and avenge her wrongs ;
 And all this while she treats me as her foe !

Phæn. You have it in your power to be reveng'd.

Pyr. Yes :—and I'll shew my power ! I'll give her
 cause

To hate me ! her Astyanax shall die.—
 What tears will then be shed ! How will she then,
 In bitterness of heart, reproach my name !
 Then, to compleat her woes, will I espouse
 Hermione :—'Twill stab her to the heart !

Phæn. Alas, you threaten like a lover still !

Pyr. Phœnix, excuse this struggle of my soul :
 'Tis the last effort of expiring love.

Phæn. Then hasten, sir, to see the Spartan princess ;
 And turn the bent of your desires on her.

Pyr. Oh ! 'tis a heavy task to conquer love.
 And wean the soul from her accustom'd fondness.
 But, come :—A long farewell to Hector's widow.
 'Tis with a secret pleasure I look back,
 And see the many dangers I have pass'd.
 The merchant thus, in dreadful tempests tost,
 Thrown by the waves on some unlook'd-for coast,
 Oft turns, and sees, with a delighted eye,
 Midst rocks and shelves the broken billows fly !
 And while the outrageous winds the deep deform,
 Smiles on the tumult, and enjoys the storm. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT III. SCENE I.

PYLADES and ORESTES.

Pylades.

FOR Heav'n's sake, sir, compose your ruffled mind!
And moderate your rage!

Orest. No, Pylades!

This is no time for counsel.—I am deaf.
Talk not of reason! I have been too patient.
Life is not worth my care. My soul grows desperate.
I'll bear her off, or perish in the attempt.
I'll force her from his arms:—By Heav'n I will!

Pyl. Well, 'tis agreed, my friend:—We'll force
her hence,

But still consider, we are in Epirus.
The court, the guards, Hermione herself,
The very air we breathe, belongs to Pyrrhus.
Good gods! what tempted you to seek her here?

Orest. Lost to myself, I knew not what I did!
My purposes were wild. Perhaps I came
To menace Pyrrhus, and upbraid the woman.*Pyl.* This violence of temper may prove fatal.*Orest.* It must be more than man to bear these shocks,
These outrages of fate, with temper!
He tells me, that he weds Hermione;
And will to-morrow take her from my hand!—
My hand shall sooner tear the tyrant's heart.—

Pyl. Your passion blinds you, sir; he's not too blame.

Could you but look into the soul of Pyrrhus,
Perhaps you'd find it tortur'd, like your own.

Orest. No, Pylades! 'Tis all design—His pride,
To triumph over me, has chang'd his love.
The fair Hermione, before I came,
In all her bloom of beauty, was neglected.
Ah, cruel gods! I thought her all my own!
She was consenting to return to Sparta:
Her heart, divided betwixt rage and love,
Was on the wing to take its leave of Pyrrhus.
She heard my sighs; she pitied my complaints;
She prais'd my constancy;—The least indifference
From this proud king, had made Orestes happy.

Pyl. So your fond heart believes!

“*Orest.* Did I not see

“ Her hate, her rage, her indignation rise

“ Against the ungrateful man?

“ *Pyl.* Believe me, prince,

“ 'Twas then she lov'd him most! Had Pyrrhus left
her,

“ She would have form'd some new pretext to stay.”

Take my advice:—Think not to force her hence;

But fly yourself from her destructive charms.

Her soul is link'd to Pyrrhus: “ Were she yours,

“ She would reproach you still, and still regret

“ Her disappointed nuptials.—”

Orest. Talk no more!

I cannot bear the thought! She must be mine!

Did Pyrrhus carry thunder in his hand,
 I'd stand the bolt, and challenge all his fury,
 Ere I resign'd Hermione.—By force
 I'll snatch her hence, and bear her to my ships;
 Have we forgot her mother Helen's rape?

Pyl. Will then Orestes turn a ravisher!
 And blot his embassy?

Orest. Oh, Pylades!
 My grief weighs heavy on me:—'Twill distract me!
 "O leave me to myself!—Let not thy friendship
 "Involve thee in my woes. Too long already,
 "Too long hast thou been punish'd for my crimes.
 "It is enough, my friend!—It is enough!
 "Let not thy generous love betray thee farther:"
 The gods have set me as their mark, to empty
 Their quivers on me.—Leave me to myself.
 Mine be the danger; mine the enterprize.
 All I request of thee is, to return,
 And in my place convey Astyanax
 (As Pyrrhus has consented) into Greece.
 Go, Pylades—

Pyl. Lead on, my friend, lead on!
 Let us bear off Hermione! No toil,
 No danger can deter a friend:—Lead on!
 Draw up the Greeks; summon your num'rous train:
 'The ships are ready and the wind sits fair:
 'There eastward lies the sea; the rolling waves
 Break on those palace-stairs. I know each pass,
 Each avenue and outlet of the court.
 This very night we'll carry her on board.

Orest. Thou art too good!—I trespass on thy friendship,

But, Oh! excuse a wretch, whom no man pities,
Except thyself: one just about to lose
The treasure of his soul: “whom all mankind
“Conspire to hate, and one who hates himself.”
When will my friendship be of use to thee?

Pyl. The question is unkind.—But now remember
To keep your counsels close, and hide your thoughts;
Let not Hermione suspect—No more——
I see her coming, sir——

Orest. Away, my friend;
I am advis'd; my all depends upon it. [*Ex. Pylades.*]

Enter HERMIONE and CLEONE.

Orest. Madam, your orders are obey'd; I have seen
Pyrrhus, my rival; and have gain'd him for you.
The king resolves to wed you.

Her. So I am told:
And farther, I'm inform'd that you, Orestes,
Are to dispose me for the intended marriage.

Orest. And are you, madam, willing to comply?

“*Her.* Could I imagine Pyrrhus lov'd me still?
“After so long delays, who would have thought
“His hidden flames would shew themselves at last,
“And kindle in his breast, when mine expir'd?
“I can suppose, with you, he fears the Greeks;
“That it is interest, and not love, directs him;
“And that my eyes had greater power o'er you.

“*Orest.* No, princess, no! It is too plain he loves you.

“Your eyes do what they will, and cannot fail

“To gain a conquest, where you wish they should.”

Her. What can I do? alas! my faith is promis'd.
Can I refuse what is not mine to give?

A princess is not at her choice to love;

All we have left us is a blind obedience:

And yet, you see, how far I had comply'd,

And made my duty yield to your intreaties.

Orest. Ah, cruel maid! you knew—but I have done.

All have a right to please themselves in love:

I blame not you. 'Tis true, I hop'd;—but you

Are mistress of your heart, and I'm content.

'Tis fortune is my enemy, not you.

But, madam, I shall spare you farther pain

On this uneasy theme, and take my leave.

[*Exit Orestes.*]

Her. Cleone, could'st thou think he'd be so calm:

Cleo. Madam, his silent grief sits heavy on him.

He's to be pitied. His too eager love

Has made him busy to his own destruction.

His threats have wrought this change of mind in
Pyrrhus.

Her. Dost thou think Pyrrhus capable of fear!

Whom should the intrepid Pyrrhus fear? the Greeks?

Did he not lead their harrass'd troops to conquest

When they despair'd, when they retir'd from Troy,

And sought for shelter in their burning fleets?

Did he not then supply his father's place?

No, my Cleone, he is above constraint;

He acts unforc'd; and where he weds he loves.

Cleo. Oh, that Orestes had remain'd in Greece!
I fear to-morrow will prove fatal to him.

Her. Wilt thou discourse of nothing but Orestes?
Pyrrhus is mine again!—Is mine for ever!
Oh, my Cleone! I am wild with joy!
Pyrrhus, the bold! the brave! the godlike Pyrrhus!
—Oh, I could tell thee numberless exploits,
And tire thee with his battles—Oh, Cleone—

Cleo. Madam, conceal your joy—I see Andromache:
She weeps, and comes to speak her sorrows to you.

Her. I would indulge the gladness of my heart!
Let us retire: her grief is out of season.

Enter ANDROMACHE and CEPHISA.

Andr. Ah, madam, whither, whither do you fly?
Where can your eyes behold a sight more pleasing
Than Hector's widow suppliant and in tears?
I come not an alarm'd, a jealous foe,
To envy you the heart your charms have won:
The only man I sought to please, is gone;
Kill'd in my sight, by an inhuman hand.
“Hector first taught me love; which my fond heart
“Shall ever cherish, 'till we meet in death.”
But, Oh, I have a son!—And you, one day,
Will be no stranger to a mother's fondness:
But Heav'n forbid that you should ever know
A mother's sorrow for an only son.
Her joy, her bliss, her last surviving comfort!
When every hour she trembles for his life!
Your power o'er Pyrrhus may relieve my fears.

Alas, what danger is there in a child,
 Sav'd from the wreck of a whole ruin'd empire ?
 Let me go hide him in some desert isle :
 You may rely upon my tender care
 To keep him far from perils of ambition :
 All he can learn of me, will be to weep.

Her. Madam, 'tis easy to conceive your grief :
 But, it would ill become me, to solicit
 In contradiction to my father's will :
 'Tis he who urges to destroy your son.
 Madam, if Pyrrhus must be wrought to pity,
 No woman does it better than yourself ;
 If you gain him, I shall comply of course.

[*Exit Her. and Cleone.*]

Andr. Didst thou not mind with what disdain she
 spoke ?

Youth and prosperity have made her vain ;
 She has not seen the fickle turns of life.

Ceph. Madam, were I as you, I'd take her counsel !
 I'd speak my own distress : one look from you
 Will vanquish Pyrrhus, and confound the Greeks—
 See, where he comes—Lay hold on this occasion.

Enter PYRRHUS and PHOENIX.

Pyr. Where is the princess ?—Did you not inform me
 Hermione was here ? [To Phœnix.

Phæn. I thought so, sir.

Andr. Thou seest what mighty power my eyes have
 on him ! [To Ceph.

Pyr. What says she, Phœnix ?

Andr. I have no hope left!

Phæn. Let us begone :—Hermione expects you.

Ceph. For Heaven's sake, madam, break this sullen silence.

Andr. My child's already promis'd——

Ceph. But not given.

Andr. No, no! my tears are vain! his doom is fixt!

Pyr. See, if she deigns to cast one look upon us!

Proud woman!

Andr. I provoke him by my presence.

Let us retire.

Pyr. Come, let us satisfy

The Greeks; and give them up this Phrygian boy.

Andr. Ah, sir! recall those words—What have you said!

If you give up my son, Oh, give up me!—

You, who so many times have sworn me friendship:

Oh, Heav'ns!—will you not look with pity on me?

Is there no hope? Is there no room for pardon?

Pyr. Phœnix will answer you: my word is past.

Andr. You, who would brave so many dangers for me.

Pyr. I was your lover then: I now am free.

To favour you, I might have spar'd his life:

But you would ne'er vouchsafe to ask it of me.

Now, 'tis too late.

“*Andr.* Ah, sir, you understood

“My tears, my wishes, which I durst not utter,

“Afraid of a repulse.” Oh, sir, excuse

The pride of Royal blood, that checks my soul.

You know, alas! I was not born to kneel,
To sue for pity, and to own a master.

Pyr. No! in your heart you curse me! you disdain
My generous flame, and scorn to be oblig'd!
“ This very son, this darling of your soul,
“ Would be less dear, did I preserve him for you.
“ Your anger, your aversion fall on me!
“ You hate me more than the whole league of Greece:”
But I shall leave you to your great resentments.
Let us go, Phœnix, and appease the Greeks.

Andr. Then, let me die! and let me go to Hector.

Ceph. But, madam——

Andr. What can I do more? The tyrant
Sees my distraction and insults my tears. [*To Ceph.*
——Behold how low you have reduc'd a queen!
These eyes have seen my country laid in ashes;
My kindred fall in war; my father slain;
My husband dragg'd in his own blood; my son
Condemn'd to bondage, and myself a slave;
Yet, in the midst of these unheard-of woes,
'Twas some relief to find myself your captive;
And that my son, deriv'd from ancient kings,
Since he must serve, had Pyrrhus for his master.
When Priam kneel'd, the great Achilles wept:
I hop'd I should not find his son less noble.
I thought the brave were still the most compassionate.
Oh, do not, sir, divide me from my child!
If he must die——

Pyr. Phœnix, withdraw a while. [*Ex. Phœnix.*
Rise, madam—Yet you may preserve your son.

I find whenever I provoke your tears,
 I furnish you with arms against myself.
 I thought my hatred fixt before I saw you.
 Oh, turn your eyes upon me, while I speak!
 And see, if you discover in my looks
 An angry judge, or an obdurate foe.
 Why will you force me to desert your cause?
 In your son's name I beg we may be friends;
 "Let me entreat you to secure his life!
 "Must I turn suppliant for him?" Think, oh think,
 'Tis the last time, you both may yet be happy!
 I know the ties I break; the foes I arm:
 I wrong Hermione; I send her hence;
 And with her diadem I bind your brows.
 Consider well; for 'tis of moment to you!
 Choose to be wretched, madam, or a queen.
 "My soul, consum'd with a whole year's despair,
 "Can bear no longer these perplexing doubts;
 "Enough of sighs, and tears, and threats I've try'd;
 "I know, if I'm depriv'd of you, I die:
 "But oh, I die, if I wait longer for you!"
 I leave you to your thoughts. When I return,
 We'll to the temple; there you'll find your son;
 And there be crown'd, or give him up for ever.
[Exit Pyrrhus.]

Ceph. I told you, madam, that, in spite of Greece,
 You would o'er-rule the malice of your fortune.

Andr. Alas! Cephisa, what have I obtain'd!
 Only a poor short respite for my son.

Ceph. You have enough approv'd your faith to
Hector ;

To be reluctant still would be a crime.

He would himself persuade you to comply.

Andr. How——wouldst thou give me Pyrrhus for
a husband ?

Ceph. Think you, 'twill please the ghost of your
dead husband,

That you should sacrifice his son ? Consider,
Pyrrhus once more invites you to a throne ;
Turns all his power against the foes of Troy ;
Remembers not Achilles was his father ;
Retracts his conquest, and forgets his hatred.

Andr. But how can I forget it ! How can I
Forget my Hector treated with dishonour ;
Depriv'd of funeral rites ; and vilely dragg'd,
A bloody corse, about the walls of Troy ?
Can I forget the good old king his father,
Slain in my presence ; at the altar slain !
Which vainly, for protection, he embrac'd ?
Hast thou forgot that dreadful night, Cephisa,
When a whole people fell ? Methinks I see
Pyrrhus enrag'd, and breathing vengeance, enter
Amidst the glare of burning palaces :
I see him hew his passage through my brothers ;
And, bath'd in blood, lay all my kindred waste.
Think in this scene of horror, what I suffer'd !
This is the courtship I receiv'd from Pyrrhus ;
And this the husband thou wouldst give me ! No,
We both will perish first ! I'll ne'er consent.

Ceph. Since you resolve Astyanax shall die,
Haste to the temple, bid your son farewell.
Why do you tremble, madam?

Andr. O Cephisa!
Thou hast awaken'd all the mother in me.
How can I bid farewell to the dear child,
The pledge, the image of my much-lov'd lord!
"Alas, I call to mind the fatal day,
"When his too-forward courage led him forth
"To seek Achilles.

"*Ceph.* Oh, the unhappy hour!
"'Twas then Troy fell, and all her gods forsook her.

"*Andr.* That morn, Cephisa, that ill-fated morn,
"My husband bid thee bring Astyanax;
"He took him in his arms; and, as I wept,
"My wife, my dear Andromache, said he,
"(Heaving with stifled sighs to see me weep)
"What fortune may attend my arms, the gods
"Alone can tell. To thee I give the boy;
"Preserve him as the token of our loves;
"If I should fall, let him not miss his sire
"While thou surviv'st; but by thy tender care
"Let the son see that thou didst love his father.

"*Ceph.* And will you throw away a life so precious?
"At once extirpate all the Trojan line?

"*Andr.* Inhuman king! What has he done to
suffer?

"If I neglect your vows, is he to blame?
"Has he reproach'd you with his slaughter'd kindred?
"Can he resent those ills he does not know?"

But, oh! while I deliberate he dies.

No, no, thou must not die, while I can save thee;

Oh! let me find out Pyrrhus—Oh, Cephisa!

Do thou go find him.

Ceph. What must I say to him?

Andr. Tell him I love my son to such excess—

But dost thou think he means the child shall die?

Can love rejected turn to so much rage?

Ceph. Madam, he'll soon be here—Resolve on something.

Andr. Well then, assure him—

Ceph. Madam, of your love?

Andr. Alas, thou know'st it is not in my power.

Oh, my dead lord! Oh, Priam's royal house!

Oh, my Astyanax! At what a price

Thy mother buys thee!—Let us go.

Ceph. But whither?

And what does your unsettled heart resolve?

Andr. Come, my Cephisa, let us go together,

To the sad monument which I have rais'd

To Hector's shade; where in their sacred urn

The ashes of my hero lie inclos'd;

The dear remains, which I have sav'd from Troy;

There let me weep, there summon to my aid,

With pious rites, my Hector's awful shade;

Let him be witness to my doubts, my fears;

My agonizing heart, my flowing tears;

Oh! may he rise in pity from his tomb,

And fix his wretched son's uncertain doom.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

ANDROMACHE, CEPHISA.

Cephisa.

“BLEST be the tomb of Hector, that inspires
“These pious thoughts: or is it Hector’s self,
“That prompts you to preserve your son! ’Tis he
“Who still presides o’er ruin’d Troy; ’tis he
“Who urges Pyrrhus to restore Astyanax.

“*Andr.* Pyrrhus has said he will; and thou hast
heard him

“Just now renew the oft-repeated promise.

“*Ceph.* Already in the transports of his heart,
“He gives you up his kingdom, his allies,
“And thinks himself o’er-paid for all in you.

“*Andr.* I think I may rely upon his promise:
“And yet my heart is over-charg’d with grief.

“*Ceph.* Why should you grieve! You see he bids
defiance

“To all the Greeks; and to protect your son
“Against their rage, has plac’d his guards about him;
“Leaving himself defenceless for his sake:
“But, madam, think, the coronation pomp
“Will soon demand your presence in the temple:
“’Tis time you lay aside these mourning weeds.

“*Andr.* I will be there; but first would see my son.

“*Ceph.* Madam, you need not now be anxious for
him,

- " He will be always with you, all your own,
 " To lavish the whole mother's fondness on him.
 " What a delight to train beneath your eye,
 " A son, who grows no longer up in bondage?
 " A son, in whom a race of kings revive:
 " But, madam, you are sad, and wrapt in thought,
 " As if you relish'd not your happiness.
 " *Andr.* Oh, I must see my son once more, Cephisa!
 " *Ceph.* Madam, he now will be no more a captive;
 " Your visits may be frequent as you please.
 " To-morrow you may pass the live-long day——
 " *Andr.* To-morrow! Oh, Cephisa!—But, no more!
 " Cephisa, I have always found thee faithful:
 " A load of care weighs down my drooping heart.
 " *Ceph.* Oh! that 'twere possible for me to ease you.
 " *Andr.* I soon shall exercise thy long-try'd faith.—
 " Mean while I do conjure thee, my Cephisa,
 " Thou take no notice of my present trouble:
 " And when I shall disclose my secret purpose,
 " That thou be punctual to perform my will.
 " *Ceph.* Madam, I have no will but yours. My life
 " Is nothing, balanc'd with my love to you.
 " *Andr.* I thank thee, good Cephisa; my Astyanax
 " Will recompense thy friendship to his mother.
 " But, come; my heart's at ease: assist me now
 " To change this sable habit."—Yonder comes
 Hermione; I would not meet her rage. [*Exeunt.*

Enter HERMIONE and CLEONE.

Cleo. This unexpected silence, this reserve,

This outward calm, this settled frame of mind,
 After such wrongs and insults, much surprize me!
 You, who before could not command your rage,
 When Pyrrhus look'd but kindly on his captive;
 How can you bear unmov'd, that he should wed her?
 And seat her on a throne which you should fill?
 I fear this dreadful stillness in your soul!
 'Twere better, madam—

Her. Have you call'd Orestes?

Cleo. Madam, I have; his love is too impatient
 Not to obey with speed the welcome summons.
 His love-sick heart o'erlooks his unkind usage:
 His ardour's still the same—Madam, he's here.

Enter ORESTES.

Orest. Ah, madam, is it true? Does, then, Orestes
 At length attend you by your own commands?
 What can I do——

Her. Orestes, do you love me?

Orest. What means that question, princess? Do I
 love you?

My oaths, my perjuries, my hopes, my fears,
 My farewell, my return, all speak my love.

Her. Avenge my wrongs, and I'll believe them all.

Orest. It shall be done—my soul has catch'd the
 alarm.

We'll spirit up the Greeks—I'll lead them on——
 Your cause shall animate our fleets and armies.
 Let us return: let us not lose a moment,

But urge the fate of this devoted land :
Let us depart.

Her. No, prince, let us stay here !
I will have vengeance here—I will not carry
This load of infamy to Greece, nor trust
The chance of war to vindicate my wrongs.
Ere I depart, I'll make Epirus mourn.
If you avenge me, let it be this instant ;
My rage brooks no delay—Haste to the temple,
Haste, prince, and sacrifice him.

Orest. Whom !

Her. Why, Pyrrhus.

Orest. Pyrrhus ! Did you say, Pyrrhus ?

Her. You demur !

Oh, fly, begone ! give me no time to think !
Talk not of laws—he tramples on all laws—
Let me not hear him justify'd——away.

Orest. You cannot think I'll justify my rival.
Madam, your love has made him criminal.
You shall have vengeance ; I'll have vengeance too :
But let our hatred be profest and open :
Let us alarm all Greece, denounce a war ;
Let us attack him in his strength, and hunt him down
By conquest : should I turn base assassin,
'Twould sully all the kings I represent.

Her. Have I not been dishonour'd ! set at nought !
Expos'd to public scorn !——and will you suffer
The tyrant, who dares use me thus, to live ?
Know, prince, I hate him more than once I lov'd him ;
The Gods alone can tell how once I lov'd him ;

Yes, the false perjur'd man, I once did love him;
And spite of all his crimes and broken vows,
If he should live, I may relapse—who knows
But I to-morrow may forgive his wrongs?

Orest. First let me tear him piece-meal—he shall die.
But, madam, give me leisure to contrive
The place, the time, the manner of his death:
Yet I'm a stranger in the court of Pyrrhus;
Scarce have I set my foot within Epirus,
When you enjoin me to destroy the prince.
It shall be done this very night.

Her. But now,
This very hour, he weds Andromache;
The temple shines with pomp; the golden throne
Is now prepar'd; the joyful rites begin;
My shame is public—Oh, be speedy, prince!
My wrath's impatient—Pyrrhus lives too long!
Intent on love, and heedless of his person,
He covers with his guards the Trojan boy.
Now is the time; assemble all your Greeks;
Mine shall assist them; let their fury loose:
Already they regard him as a foe.
Begone, Orestes—kill the faithless tyrant:
My love shall recompense the glorious deed.

Orest. Consider, madam——

Her. You but mock my rage!
I was contriving how to make you happy.
Think you to merit by your idle sighs,
And not attest your love by one brave action?
Go, with your boasted constancy! and leave

Hermione to execute her own revenge!
 I blush to think how my too easy faith
 Has twice been baffled in one shameful hour!

Orest. Hear me but speak!—you know I'll die to
 serve you!

Her. I'll go myself: I'll stab him at the altar;
 Then drive the poinard, reeking with his blood,
 Through my own heart. In death we shall unite:
 Better to die with him, than live with you!

Orest. That were to make him blest; and me more
 wretched:

Madam, he dies by me:—Have you a foe,
 And shall I let him live? My rival, too?
 Ere yon meridian sun declines, he dies:
 And you shall say, that I deserve your love.

Her. Go, prince; strike home! and leave the rest
 to me.

Let all your ships be ready for our flight.

[*Exit Orestes.*]

Cleo. Madam, you'll perish in this bold attempt.

Her. Give me my vengeance, I'm content to perish.
 I was to blame to trust it with another:
 In my own hands it had been more secure.
 Orestes hates not Pyrrhus as I hate him:
 "I should have thrust the dagger home; have seen
 "The tyrant curse me with his parting breath,
 "And roll about his dying eyes, in vain,
 "To find Andromache, whom I would hide."
 Oh, would Orestes, when he gives the blow,
 Tell him he dies my victim!—Haste, Cleone;

Charge him to say, Hermione's resentments,
Not those of Greece, have sentenc'd him to death.
Haste, my Cleone! My revenge is lost,
If Pyrrhus knows not that he dies by me!

Cleo. I shall obey your orders—But see
The king approach!—Who could expect him here.

Her. O fly! Cleone, fly! and bid Orestes
Not proceed a step before I see him. [*Exit Cleone.*]

Enter PYRRHUS.

Pyr. Madam, I ought to shun an injur'd princess:
Your distant looks reproach me: and I come
Not to defend, but to avow my guilt.

Pyrrhus will ne'er approve his own injustice;
Nor form excuses, while his heart condemns him.

"I might perhaps alledge, our warlike sires,

"Unknown to us, engag'd us to each other.

"And join'd our hearts by contract, not by love:

"But I detest such cobweb arts, I own

"My father's treaty, and allow its force.

"I sent ambassadors to call you hither;

"Receiv'd you as my queen; and hop'd my oaths

"So oft renew'd might ripen into love.

"The gods can witness, madam, how I fought

"Against Andromache's too fatal charms!

"And still I wish I had the power to leave

"This Trojan beauty, and be just to you."

Discharge your anger on this perjur'd man!

For I abhor my crime! and should be pleas'd

To hear you speak your wrongs aloud: no terms,

No bitterness of wrath, nor keen reproach,
Will equal half the upbraidings of my heart.

Her. I find, sir, you can be sincere : you scorn
To act your crimes with fear, like other men.
A hero should be bold ; above all laws ;
Be bravely false ; and laugh at solemn ties.
To be perfidious shews a daring mind !
And you have nobly triumph'd o'er a maid !
To court me ; to reject me ; to return ;
Then to forsake me for a Phrygian slave :
To lay proud Troy in ashes ; then to raise
The son of Hector, and renounce the Greeks,
Are actions worthy the great soul of Pyrrhus.

Pyr. Madam, go on : give your resentments birth ;
And pour forth all your indignation on me.

Her. 'Twould please your queen, should I upbraid
your falsehood ;
Call you perfidious, traitor, all the names
That injur'd virgins lavish on your sex ;
I should o'erflow with tears, and die with grief,
And furnish out a tale to soothe her pride.
But, sir, I would not over-charge her joys :
If you would charm Andromache, recount
Your bloody battles, your exploits, your slaughters,
Your great achievements, in her father's palace.
She needs must love the man, who fought so bravely,
And in her sight slew half her royal kindred.

Pyr. With horror I look back on my past deeds !
I punish'd Helen's wrongs too far ; I shed
Too much of blood : but madam, Helen's daughter

Should not object those ills the mother caus'd.
 However I am pleas'd to find you hate me :
 I was too forward to accuse myself :
 The man who ne'er was lov'd, can ne'er be false.
 Obedience to a father brought you hither ;
 And I stood bound by promise to receive you :
 But our desires were different ways inclin'd ;
 And you, I own, were not oblig'd to love me.

Her. Have I not lov'd you, then! perfidious man!
 For you I slighted all the Grecian princes ;
 Forsook my father's house ; conceal'd my wrongs,
 When most provok'd : would not return to Sparta,
 In hopes that time might fix your wavering heart,
 I lov'd you when inconstant : and even now,
 Inhuman king, that you pronounce my death,
 My heart still doubts, if I should love or hate you :
 But, oh, since you resolve to wed another,
 Defer your cruel purpose till to-morrow !
 That I may not be here to grace your triumph !
 This is the last request I e'er shall make you——
 See if the barbarous prince vouchsafes an answer !
 Go, then, to the lov'd Phrygian! Hence! begone !
 And bear to her those vows, that once were mine :
 Go, in defiance to the avenging gods !
 Begone! the priest expects you at the altar——
 But, tyrant, have a care I come not thither. [*Ex. Her.*

Enter PHOENIX.

Plx. Sir, did you mind her threats? Your life's in danger!

There is no trifling with a woman's rage.
 The Greeks that swarm about the court, all hate you;
 Will treat you as their country's enemy,
 And join in her revenge: besides, Orestes
 Still loves her to distraction: sir, I beg——

Pyr. How, Phœnix, should I fear a woman's threats?
 A nobler passion takes up all my thought:
 I must prepare to meet Andromache.
 Do thou place all my guards about her son:
 If he be safe, Pyrrhus is free from fear. [*Ex. Pyr.*]

PHOENIX, *alone.*

Oh, Pyrrhus! oh, what pity 'tis, the gods,
 Who fill'd thy soul with every kingly virtue,
 Form'd thee for empire and consummate greatness,
 Should leave thee so expos'd to wild desires,
 That hurry thee beyond the bounds of reason!

[*A flourish of trumpets.*]

“Such was Achilles; generous, fierce, and brave:
 “Open and undesigning: but impatient,
 “Undisciplin'd, and not to be control'd:
 “I fear this whirl of passion, this career,
 “That overbears reflection and cool thought;
 “I tremble for the event!”—But see, the queen,
 Magnificent in royal pride, appears.
 I must obey, and guard her son from danger.

[*Exit Phœnix.*]

Enter ANDROMACHE and CEPHISA.

Ceph. Madam, once more you look and move a
 queen!

Your sorrows are dispers'd, your charms revive,
And every faded beauty blooms anew.

Andr. Yet all is not as I could wish, Cephisa.

Ceph. You see the king is watchful o'er your son;
Decks him with princely robes, with guards surrounds
him.

Astyanax begins to reign already.

Andr. Pyrrhus is nobly minded: and I fain
Would live to thank him for Astyanax:
'Tis a vain thought—However, since my child
Has such a friend, I ought not to repine.

Ceph. “These dark unfoldings of your soul perplex me.

“What meant those floods of tears, those warm embraces,

“As if you bid your son adieu for ever?”

For Heav'n's sake, madam, let me know your griefs!
If you mistrust my faith—

Andr. That were to wrong thee.

Oh, my Cephisa! this gay, borrow'd air,

This blaze of jewels, and this bridal dress,

Are but mock trappings to conceal my woe:

My heart still mourns; I still am Hector's widow.

Ceph. Will you then break the promise giv'n to
Pyrrhus;

Blow up his rage afresh, and blast your hopes?

Andr. I thought, Cephisa, thou hadst known thy
mistress. —

Could'st thou believe I would be false to Hector?

Fall off from such a husband! break his rest,

And call him to this hated light again,
To see Andromache in Pyrrhus' arms ?

“ Would Hector, were he living, and I dead,
“ Forget Andromache, and wed her foe ? ”

Ceph. I cannot guess what drift your thoughts pursue ;
But, oh, I fear there's something dreadful in it !
Must then Astyanax be doom'd to die ;
And you to linger out a life in bondage ?

“ *Andr.* Nor this, nor that, Cephisa, will I bear ;
“ My word is past to Pyrrhus, his to me ;
“ And I rely upon his promis'd faith.
“ Unequal as he is, I know him well :
“ Pyrrhus is violent, but he's sincere,
“ And will perform beyond what he has sworn.
“ The Greeks will but incense him more ; their rage
“ Will make him cherish Hector's son.

“ *Ceph.* Ah, madam,
“ Explain these riddles to my boding heart !

“ *Andr.* Thou may'st remember, for thou oft hast
heard me

“ Relate the dreadful vision, which I saw,
“ When first I landed captive in Epirus.
“ That very night, as in a dream I lay,
“ A ghastly figure, full of gaping wounds,
“ His eyes aglare, his hair all stiff with blood,
“ Full in my sight thrice shook his head, and groan'd ;
“ I soon discern'd my slaughter'd Hector's shade ;
“ But, oh, how chang'd ! Ye gods, how much unlike
“ The living Hector !——Loud he bid me fly !
“ Fly from Achilles' son ! then sternly frown'd,

“ And disappear’d. Struck with the dreadful sound,
“ I started, and awak’d.

“ *Ceph.* But did he bid you

“ Destroy Astyanax?

Andr. “ Cephisa, I’ll preserve him;”

With my own life, Cephisa, I’ll preserve him.

Ceph. What may these words, so full of horror,
mean?

Andr. Know then the secret purpose of my soul:

Andromache will not be false to Pyrrhus,

Nor violate her sacred love to Hector.

This hour I’ll meet the king; the holy priest

Shall join us, and confirm our mutual vows:

This will secure a father to my child:

That done, I have no further use for life:

This pointed dagger, this determin’d hand,

Shall save my virtue, and conclude my woes.

“ *Ceph.* Ah, madam! recollect your scatter’d reason;

“ This fell despair ill suits your present fortunes.

“ *Andr.* No other stratagem can serve my purpose:

“ This is the sole expedient to be just

“ To Hector, to Astyanax, to Pyrrhus.

“ I shall soon visit Hector, and the shades

“ Of my great ancestors:”—Cephisa, thou

Wilt lend a hand to close thy mistress’ eyes.

Ceph. Oh, never think that I will stay behind you!

Andr. No, my Cephisa; I must have thee live.

“ Remember, thou didst promise to obey,

“ And to be secret: wilt thou now betray me?

“ After thy long, thy faithful service, wilt thou

“ Refuse my last commands, my dying wish ?

“ Once more I do conjure thee live for me.

“ *Ceph.* Life is not worth my care when you are gone.”

Andr. I must commit into thy faithful hands
All that is dear and precious to my soul :
Live, and supply my absence to my child ;
All that remains of Troy ; a future progeny
Of heroes, and a distant line of kings,
In him, is all intrusted to thy care.

“ *Ceph.* But, madam, what will be the rage of
Pyrrhus,

“ Defrauded of his promis'd happiness ?

“ *Andr.* That will require thy utmost skill : Observe

“ The first impetuous onsets of his grief ;

“ Use ev'ry artifice to keep him stedfast.

“ Sometimes with tears thou mayst discourse of me ;

“ Speak of our marriage ; let him think I lov'd him ;

“ Tell him my soul repos'd itself on him,

“ When I resign'd my son to his protection.”

Ceph. Oh, for a spirit to support my grief !
Is there ought more before you go for ever ?

Andr. Oh, my Cephisa ! my swoln heart is full !
I have a thousand farewells to my son :

But tears break in !—Grief interrupts my speech——

My soul o'erflows in fondness——Let him know

I dy'd to save him :—“ And would die again.”

Season his mind with early hints of glory ;

Make him acquainted with his ancestors ;

Trace out their shining story in his thoughts ;

Dwell on th' exploits of his immortal father,
 And sometimes let him hear his mother's name.
 " Let him reflect upon his royal birth
 " With modest pride ; Pyrrhus will prove a friend :
 " But let him know he has a conqueror's right."
 He must be taught to stifle his resentments,
 And sacrifice his vengeance to his safety.
 Should he prove headstrong, rash, or unadvis'd,
 He then will frustrate all his mother's virtue,
 Provoke his fate, and I shall die in vain.

Ceph. Alas ! I fear I never shall outlive you.

Andr. No more :—thy tears, Cephisa, will betray me ;
 Assume a cheerful look : but still remember—

[*Flourish within.*

Hark how the trumpet, with its sprightly notes,
 Proclaims the appointed hour, and calls us hence,
 Hector, I come, once more a queen, to join thee !
 Thus the gay victim, with fresh garlands crown'd,
 Pleas'd with the sacred fife's enliv'ning sound,
 Through gazing crouds in solemn state proceeds,
 And drest in fatal pomp magnificently bleeds.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V. SCENE I.

HERMIONE *alone.*

WHAT have I done ? Where am I ? Where is
 Pyrrhus ?

Ye gods ! what mean these horrors ?—I'm undone !

My soul is on the rack!—I cannot bear it:—
 Why do I wander like some guilty ghost?
 What brought me to this place? What keeps me here?
 The court of Pyrrhus has no room for me!
 Do I still doubt if I should love or hate him?
 Hard-hearted man! how unconcern'd he left me!
 Did he once sigh? Bestow one pitying look?
 Once shed a tear? or speak one soft, kind word?
 Did he so much as feign one moment's sorrow,
 To calm my griefs, and mitigate his falsehood?
 Why am I still thus anxious for his life?
 Why do I start at his impending fate?
 Shall he then live? Shall the base traitor live
 To laugh at my distress? No, let him perish!
 Be quick, Orestes?—Execute my orders!
 Alas! my orders! Oh, preposterous guilt!
 Can I decree the death of him I love?
 Was it for this my soul delighted in him?
 Was it for this I left my father's court?
 Have I then cross'd so many realms and seas
 To murder Pyrrhus?

Enter CLEONE.

Her. Oh, Cleone, help me!
 What have I done? Is Pyrrhus yet alive?
 What say'st thou?—Answer me: Where is the king?
Cleo. Madam! I saw the cruel prince set forward,
 Triumphant in his looks, and full of joy.
 Still as he walk'd his ravish'd eyes were fixt
 On the fair captive; while through shouting crowds

She pass'd along with a dejected air,
And seem'd to mourn her Hector to the last.

Her. Insulting tyrant! I shall burst with rage!
But say, Cleone, didst thou mark him well?
Was his brow smooth? Say, did there not appear
Some shade of grief; some little cloud of sorrow?
Did he not stop? Did he not once look back?
Didst thou approach him? Was he not confounded?
Did he not—Oh, be quick and tell me all!

Cleo. Madam, the tumult of his joy admits
No thought but love. Unguarded he march'd on,
'Midst a promiscuous throng of friends and foes.
His cares all turn upon Astyanax,
Whom he has lodg'd within the citadel,
Defended by the strength of all his guards.

Her. Enough! he dies!—the traitor?—Where's
Orestes?

Cleo. He's in the temple with his whole retinue.

Her. Is he still resolute? Is he still determin'd?

Cleo. Madam, I fear——

Her. How! Is Orestes false?

Does he betray me too?

Cleo. A thousand doubts

Perplex his soul, and wound him with remorse:

His virtue and his love prevail by turns.

He told me Pyrrhus should not fall ignobly:

Pyrrhus, the warlike son of great Achilles.

He dreads the censure of the Grecian states;

Of all mankind; and fears to stain his honour.

Her. Poor tim'rous wretch! 'tis false! he basely fears

To cope with dangers, and encounter death ;
'Tis that he fears :—Am I bright Helen's daughter ?
To vindicate her wrongs all Greece conspir'd ;
For her confederate nations fought, and kings were
slain ;

Troy was o'erthrown, and a whole empire fell.
My eyes want force to raise a lover's arm
Against a tyrant that has dar'd to wrong me.

Cleo. Madam, like Helen, trust your cause to Greece.

Her. No ; I'll avenge myself ; I'll to the temple ;
I'll overturn the altar, stab the priest ;
I'll hurl destruction like a whirlwind round me !
They must not wed ! they must not live ! they shall
not !

Let me be gone ! I have no time to lose !
Stand off ! hold me not ! I am all distraction !
Oh, Pyrrhus ! Tyrant ! Traitor ! Thou shalt bleed.

Enter ORESTES.

Orest. Madam, 'tis done ; your orders are obey'd :
The tyrant lies expiring at the altar.

Her. Is Pyrrhus slain ?

Orest. Even now he gasps in death :
Our Greeks all undistinguish'd in the crowd,
Flock'd to the temple, and dispers'd themselves
On every side the altar. I was there ;
Pyrrhus observ'd me with a haughty eye,
And, proud to triumph over Greece in me,
From his own brows he took the diadem
And bound it on the temples of his captive :

Receive, said he, my crown ; receive my faith ;
 Mine and my people's sovereign reign for ever.
 From this blest hour, a father to your son ;
 I'll scourge his foes : henceforward be he styl'd
 The Trojan king ; " I swear it at the altar,
 " And call the gods to ratify my vows."
 His subjects with loud acclamations shook
 The spacious dome. Our Greeks, enrag'd, cried out,
 Revenge ! revenge ! broke thro' the thronging press,
 And rush'd tumultuous on the unguarded king,
 " Their eager fury left no work for me."
 Pyrrhus awhile oppos'd their clashing swords,
 And dealt his fatal blows on ev'ry side
 With manly fierceness ; till oppress'd by numbers,
 Streaming with blood, all over gash'd with wounds,
 He reel'd, he groan'd, and at the altar fell.—
 Haste, madam ; let us fly ! Haste to our ships !
 They lie unmoor'd : our friends attend us there.

Her. What have they done !

Orest. Madam, forgive their rage.

I own your vengeance had been more complete,
 Had Pyrrhus fall'n by me, and had he known
 Hermione chastis'd him by my arm.

Her. Peace, monster, peace ! Go tell thy horrid tale
 To savages, and howl it in the deserts.
 Would'st thou impute to me thy barb'rous guilt ?
 Me would'st thou make th' accomplice of thy crimes ?
 Hence to thy Greeks, and boast thy foul exploits !
 My soul abhors them ! I disclaim the deed !
 Begone ! I know thee not ! Thou fell barbarian !

What had he done? What could provoke thy madness
To assassinate so great, so brave a man?
Who set thee on?

Orest. Oh, grant me patience, heav'n!
With your own lips did you not curse the tyrant,
Pronounce his death, and urge me to destroy him?

Her. What if, transported by my boundless passion,
I could not bear to see him wed another,
Were you to obey a jealous woman's phrenzy?
You should have div'd into my inmost thoughts:
My heart, tho' full of rage, was free from malice;
And all my anger was excess of love.
Why did you take me at my word? You saw
The struggles of my soul; you heard me rave;
You should have question'd me a thousand times,
Yet still have doubted, and still question'd on,
Before you ventur'd on a life so precious.

Orest. Hear me but speak: Heav'n knows, against
my will—

Her. Why did you not return? Why not consult me
A second time? And, undetermin'd still,
Again return, and still find new delays?
What had your rash officious Greeks, dire blood-
hounds!

To do with my revenge? What drew you hither?
To bring on me the vengeful woes that haunt you?
Are these the fruits of your detested love?
Your fatal embassy, your hateful presence,
Drove Pyrrhus to my rival; and destroys
Both him and me. He might have lov'd me still,

Had you ne'er interpos'd——Avaunt! Begone!
 And leave me in Epirus. I renounce
 My friends, my country, Greece, and all mankind:
 But chiefly I renounce thee! monster, thee! [*Exit.*

Orest. Am I awake? Where am I? Soft, my soul;
 Be not too rash.——Was that Hermione?
 Why should her anger thunder against me?
 Was not this blood shed all by her command?——
 I am, indeed, a most outrageous monster!
 A ruffian, murderer, a base assassin!
 And all to please a false, ungrateful woman.
 Henceforward let the laws of nations cease;
 And let the pale, that severs right and wrong,
 Things sacred and profane, be broken down;
 Gods in their temples, kings upon their thrones,
 Are not in safety, while Orestes lives.
 Oh, never more shall my torn mind be heal'd,
 Nor taste the gentle comforts of repose!
 A dreadful band of gloomy cares surround me,
 And lay strong siege to my distracted soul.

Enter PYLADES, attended by Greeks.

Pyl. Haste, prince; let us be gone: 'tis death to
 stay.

Andromache reigns queen: she gives the alarm,
 And vows revenge upon the foes of Pyrrhus.
 The people arm and muster in the streets:
 Our Greeks will not be able long to guard
 The palace gates, and to secure our flight.
 We must be speedy, sir.

Orest. You may depart,
My friends——Hermione and I remain——
Her cruelty has quite undone me!——“Go
“And leave me to myself——I’ll find her out.”

Pyl. Alas, unhappy princess! she’s no more;
“Forget her, sir, and save yourself with us.”

Orest. Hermione no more!—Oh, all ye powers!

Pyl. Full of disorder, wildness in her looks,
With hands expanded, and dishevell’d hair,
Breathless and pale, with shrieks she sought the temple;
In the mid-way she met the corpse of Pyrrhus;
She startled at the sight; then, stiff with horror,
Gaz’d frightful: waken’d from the dire amaze,
She rais’d her eyes to heav’n with such a look
As spoke her sorrows, and reproach’d the gods:
Then plung’d a poinard deep within her breast,
And fell on Pyrrhus, grasping him in death.

Orest. I thank you, gods—I never could expect
To be so wretched—You have been industrious
To finish your decrees; to make Orestes
A dreadful instance of your power to punish.
I’m singled out to bear the wrath of heav’n.

Pyl. You hazard your retreat by these delays.
The guards will soon beset us. Your complaints
Are vain, and may be fatal.

Orest. True, my friend:
And therefore ’twas I thank’d the bounteous gods.
My fate’s accomplish’d—I shall die content.
Oh, Lear me hence—blow, winds!—

Pyl. Let us be gone.

Orest. The murder'd lovers wait me—Hark, they call!

Nay, if your blood still reeks, I'll mingle mine :
One tomb will hold us all.

Pyl. Alas ! I fear

His ravings will return with his misfortunes.

Orest. I am dizzy !—Clouds !—Quite lost in utter darkness.

Guide me, some friendly pilot, through the storm.

I shiver ! Oh, I freeze !—So ;—Light returns ;

'Tis the grey dawn !—See, Pylades !—Behold !—

I am encompass'd with a sea of blood !—

The crimson billows !—Oh ! my brain's on fire !

Pyl. How is it, sir ?—Repose yourself on me.

Orest. Pyrrhus, stand off !—What would'st thou ?—

How he glares !

What envious hand has clos'd thy wounds ?—Have at thee.

It is Hermione that strikes—Confusion !

She catches Pyrrhus in her arms.—Oh, save me !

How terrible she looks ! She knits her brow !

She frowns me dead ! She frights me into madness !

Where am I ?—Who are you ?

Pyl. Alas, poor prince !

“ Help to support him.—How he pants for breath ! ”

Orest. This is most kind, my Pylades—Oh, why,

Why was I born to give thee endless trouble ?

Pyl. All will go well ; he settles into reason.

Orest. Who talks of reason ? Better to have none

Than not enough.—Run, some one, tell my Greeks,

I will not have them touch the king.—Now—now
 I blaze again!—See there!—Look where they come;
 A shoal of furies—How they swarm about me!—
 My terror!—Hide me!—Oh, their snaky locks!
 Hark, how they hiss!—See, see their flaming brands!
 Now they let drive full at me!—How they grin,
 And shake their iron whips!—My ears! what yelling!
 And see, Hermione!—She sets them on—
 Thrust not your scorpions thus into my bosom!
 Oh!—I am stung to death!—Dispatch me soon!
 There—Take my heart, Hermione!—Tear it out!
 Disjoint me! kill me! Oh, my tortur'd soul!—

Pyl. Kind Heav'n restore him to his wonted calm!
 Oft have I seen him rave: but never thus:
 Quite spent!—Assist me, friends, to bear him off.
 Our time is short: should his strong rage return,
 'Twould be beyond our power to force him hence,
 Away, my friends! I hear the portal open. [Ex.

Enter PHOENIX, attended by Guards.

Phæn. All, all are fled!—Orestes is not here—
 Triumphant villains!—The base, giddy rabble,
 Whose hands should all have been employ'd with fire,
 To waste the fleet, flock'd round the dying princess;
 And, while they stand agaze, the Greeks embark.
 Oh, 'tis too plain!—this sacrilegious murder
 Was authoriz'd.—Th' ambassador's escape
 Declares his guilt.—Most bloody embassy!
 Most unexampled deed!—Where, where, ye gods,

Is majesty secure, if in your temples
You give it no protection!—See, the queen.

[*A Flourish of Trumpets.*

Enter ANDROMACHE and CEPHISA.

Andr. Yes, ye inhuman Greeks! the time will come
When you shall dearly pay your bloody deeds!
How should the Trojans hope for mercy from you,
When thus you turn your impious rage on Pyrrhus;
Pyrrhus the bravest man in all your league;
The man whose single valour made you triumph.

[*A dead March behind.*

Is my child there?—

Ceph. It is the corpse of Pyrrhus.

The weeping soldiers bear him on their shields.

Andr. Ill-fated prince! too negligent of life:
And too unwary of the faithless Greeks!
Cut off in the fresh rip'ning prime of manhood,
Even in the pride of life: thy triumphs new,
And all thy glories in full blossom round thee!
The very Trojans would bewail thy fate.

Ceph. Alas, then, will your sorrows never end!

Andr. Oh, never, never!—While I live, my tears
Will never cease; for I was born to grieve.—
Give present orders for the fun'ral pomp: [*To Phœn.*
Let him be rob'd in all his regal state;
Place round him ev'ry shining mark of honour:
And let the pile, that consecrates his ashes,
Rise like his fame, and blaze above the clouds.

[*A Flourish of Trumpets.*

Ceph. That sound proclaims th' arrival of the prince,
The guards conduct him from the citadel.

Andr. With open arms I'll meet him!—Oh, Cephisa!

A springing joy, mixt with a soft concern,
A pleasure which no language can express,
An extacy that mothers only feel,
Plays round my heart, and brightens up my sorrow,
Like gleams of sunshine in a low'ring sky.

Though plung'd in ills, and exercis'd in care,
Yet never let the noble mind despair:
When prest by dangers and beset with foes,
The gods their timely succour interpose;
And when our virtue sinks, o'erwhelm'd with grief,
By unforeseen expedients brings relief.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

EPILOGUE.

WRITTEN BY MR. BUDGELL,

Of the Inner Temple.

Spoken by Andromache.

*I Hope you'll own, that with becoming art,
I've play'd my game, and topp'd the widow's part.
My spouse, poor man, could not live out the play,
But dy'd commodiously on his wedding-day;
While I, his reliēt, made at one bold fling,
Myself a princess, and young Sty a king.*

*You, ladies, who protract a lover's pain,
And hear your servants sigh whole years in vain;
Which of you all would not on marriage venture,
Might she so soon upon her jointure enter?*

*'Twas a strange scape! Had Pyrrhus liv'd till now,
I had been finely hamper'd in my vow.
To die by one's own hand, and fly the charms
Of love and life in a young monarch's arms!
'Twere an hard fate—ere I had undergone it,
I might have took one night—to think upon it.*

*But why, you'll say, was all this grief exprest
For a first husband, laid long since at rest?*

*Why so much coldness to my kind protector ?
—Ah, ladies ! had you known the good man Hector !
Homer will tell you, (or I'm misinform'd,)
That, when enrag'd, the Grecian camp he storm'd ;
To break the ten-fold barriers of the gate,
He threw a stone of such prodigious weight
As no two men could lift, not even of those,
Who in that age of thund'ring mortals rose :
—It would have sprain'd a dozen modern beaux.*

*At length, howe'er, I laid my weeds aside,
And sunk the widow in the well-dress'd bride.
In you it still remains to grace the play,
And bless with joy my coronation day ;
Take, then, ye circles of the brave and fair,
The fatherless and widow to your care.*







De Witte ad viv. pinx.

Long f.

WROUGHTON as EARL of ESSEX,
*I've serv'd you, Madam, with the utmost peril,
 And ever glory'd in this illustrious danger.*

London Printed for J. Bell, British Library, Strand Augst 13 1791

THE
EARL OF ESSEX.

A
TRAGEDY,
BY HENRY JONES.

ADAPTED FOR
THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,

AS PERFORMED AT THE
THEATRE-ROYAL, IN COVENT-GARDEN.

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOKS,
By Permission of the Managers.

“ The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas are omitted in the Representation.”

LONDON:

Printed for the Proprietors by

BUNNEY AND GOLD, SHOE-LANE, FLEET-STREET.

M DCC XCIX.



TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
PHILIP,
EARL OF CHESTERFIELD, &c.
Knight of the most Noble Order of the Garter.

MY LORD,

THAT you may be induced to read this dedication through, I shall begin by assuring you, that I do not intend to pay you one compliment. To praise you is unnecessary on all hands; to your Lordship, it is offensive; and for the public, they do not want to be informed of your character: it lives, at present, in the mouths of all men, and posterity will find it in the history of Europe.

My design, my Lord, is to express my own gratitude, not to delineate your merit. 'Twas your Lordship first took notice of me, in my original obscurity, whence you brought me into life, and have since continued to encourage me by your countenance and favour; and I cannot help confessing, that I have a kind of honest pride in having it known, that your Lordship thought me worthy to be taken under your protection.

These, my Lord, are the general obligations that I owe you, of which I have wished to raise some monu-

ment, that may remain as long as my name shall be remembered; but I have more particular reasons for presenting you with this tragedy, as it was your Lordship first pointed out to me the subject, and when it was finished gave me the first assurance of its success, by your approbation. I could not therefore avoid taking advantage of this opportunity, to acknowledge, publicly, all these favours; and to assure you, that I am

Your Lordship's most obliged,

Most obedient, and

Very humble servant,

HENRY JONES.

HENRY JONES.

GENIUS is perhaps of no country—it is also attached to no condition—JONES was a Bricklayer, and some genius, it may be presumable, there was where we know there was no culture. He was born in IRELAND, where genius is by no means rare.

When the great Lord CHESTERFIELD went over there, as Lord Lieutenant of that kingdom, the talents of JONES were recommended to his Lordship's protection, and the consequence was his drawing our author over to this country with him, and by his patronage endeavouring to promote his interest and advance his reputation.

JONES, with the kind assistance of his patron, had completed his tragedy of the EARL of ESSEX; and upon its performance, he rose considerably in public estimation—the play ran twelve nights. And now little seemed wanting to complete his future success in life—his Muse and himself thus powerfully supported.

But there appears to be no axiom more settled in the code of human conduct, than that success inflates a mean mind, and lifts it up to arrogance; that he whose merit achieves exalted countenance and protection, soon imagines the benefits reciprocal, and that ability is an universal magnet, which if the hand of one man should be shut, will infallibly open the generosity of another. Perhaps where there is pecuniary prudence this may be so; but when there is not, we know that beggary and wretchedness are the sure attendants of the unhappy self-deceiver.

JONES, who had in early life sacrificed to vanity, grew sturdy and unpropitiating, and thus, offering no more the food expected by the GREAT, the food he expected from them was withheld of course. He died, April 1770, in a garret belonging to the master of Bedford Coffee-house, upon whose charity he had some time lingered out a miserable existence.

He left an unfinished play called *The Cave of Idra*—which Hiffernan afterwards completed, and brought out under the title of *The Heroine of the Cave*.

THE
EARL OF ESSEX.

THE fate of this unhappy man, so compounded of fiery and ungovernable qualities, has often exercised the dramatic pen. The personages and events of the reign of our ELIZABETH are all so tinged with romantic fiction and romantic passion, the ardour of enthusiastic gallantry seems to have so oddly mingled with the cold trickeries of state policy—the heart and the lips were so unaccountably at variance, that we are not surprised to find an adoring lover turn out a haughty traitor, and a doting queen become a keen and an avenging tyrant.

Such characters, nevertheless, afford the finest subjects for the dramatic Muse, which delights in the surprises of sudden transition, and enjoys the tempest of wild and ungovernable emotions.

It is a peculiar circumstance, that these bold and original features of character among us, should have caught the consideration of no masterly writer. JEPHSON and CUMBERLAND, and the superior talents of WALPOLE, have chosen to invent a fable, or build upon an incident taken from a foreign land.

The present play has certainly many poetical beauties, but they are in truth subordinate ingredients in tragedy. The forcible colouring of strong passion, and the exhibition of the fluctuations of the human mind; the discriminative peculiarities of character; these are the grand objects of the Tragic Muse, and the story before us is as susceptible of their exertion as any we know of.

TO
MR. HENRY JONES,
ON HIS TRAGEDY OF
THE EARL OF ESSEX.

As antient heroes are renown'd in song,
For rescuing virtue from th' oppressor's wrong,
So shall thy fame, who snatch'd this well-wrought
tale
From dullness' gloomy pow'r, o'er time prevail.

Long had these scenes, wound up with dext'rous art,
In spite of reason, gain'd upon the heart;
Thaw'd ev'ry frozen fountain of the eye,
We wept, 'till even Sorrow's self was dry;
Yet judgment scorn'd what passion had approv'd,
And the head wonder'd how the heart was mov'd,
But, with a fate revers'd, thy work shall boast,
That soundest judgment shall admire it most.
Cloath'd in the easy grandeur of thy lines,
The story brightens, as the diction shines.
Renew'd with vigour as in age 'tis grown,
The wond'ring scene sees beauties not its own.

Thus, worn with years, in Afric's sultry vales,
The crested snake shakes of his tarnish'd scales;

Assumes fresh beauties brighter than the old,
Of changing colours intermix'd with gold :
Reburnish'd, basks beneath the scorching ray,
Shines with new glories in the face of day,
Darts fiercer lightning from his brandish'd tongue,
Rolls more sublime, and seems, at least, more young.

No more shall noise, and wild bombastic rage,
Usurp th' applauding thunder of the stage ;
Fustian no more shall pass for true sublime,
Nor nonsense musically float in rhyme ;
Nor, in a worse extreme, shall creeping prose,
For nature and simplicity, impose :
By thee reform'd, each vicious taste shall fail,
And critic Justice hold aloft her scale.

Whence beams this dazzling lustre on thy mind ?
Whence this vast fund of knowledge in mankind,
Unletter'd genius ? Whence hast thou been taught,
This dignity of stile, this majesty of thought ;
This rapid fire, by cool correctness rul'd,
And every learned elegance, unschool'd ?
Say, hath great Shakspeare's transmigrated shade
Inform'd thy mass, or lent thee friendly aid ?
To him, bless'd bard, untaught, 'twas also giv'n,
T' ascend, on native wings, invention's brightest
Heaven *,

Assuming Phœbus' port ; and in his train,
The Muses all, like handmaids, not in vain,

* Alluding to the prologue to Henry V.

Crouch for employment.—

The passions too, subservient to his will,
Attentive wait on his superior skill ;
At the command of his enchanting art,
Unlock the bursting flood-gates of the heart,
And in the rapid headlong stream bear down
The vanquish'd soul, and make it all his own.

Happy the clime, distinguish'd be the age,
When genius shoots spontaneous for the stage ;
Not too luxuriant, nor too trimly neat,
But, in loose wildness, negligently great.
O may the generous plant, so wond'rous rare,
Ne'er want the tender hand of fost'ring care ;
But, like Apollo's fav'rite tree, be seen,
For ever flourishing, for ever green.

M'NAMARA MORGAN.

PROLOGUE.

OUR desp'rate bard a bold excursion tries,
Tho' danger damp'd his wings, he dar'd to rise:
From hope, high rais'd, all glorious actions spring;
'Tis hence that heroes conquer, poets sing.
Even he may feel the soul exalting fire,
Fame prompts the humblest bosom to aspire.

Without a guide this rash attempt he made,
Without a clue from art, or learning's aid.
He takes a theme where tend'rest passions glow,
A theme, your grandsires felt with pleasing woe.
Essex' sad tale he strives to clothe anew,
And hopes to place it in a stronger view.

Poets, like painters, may, by equal law,
The labour'd piece from different masters draw;
Perhaps improve the plan, add fire and grace,
And strike th' impassion'd soul through all the face.
How far our author has secur'd a claim
To this exalted palm, this wish'd for fame,
Your generous sentiments will soon declare:
Humanity is ever prone to spare.
'Twere baseness then your candour to distrust;
A British audience will, at least, be just.

*A flattering truth he fearful must confess,
His sanguine friends made promise of success ;
But that, he fears, their ardent wishes wrought,
Since partial favour seldom sees a fault.
Then bear, like patient friends, this first essay,
His next shall thank you in a nobler way.*

Dramatis Personae.

COVENT-GARDEN.

Men.

The Earl of ESSEX	- - - - -	Mr. Holman.
Earl of SOUTHAMPTON	- - - - -	Mr. Farren.
Lord BURLEIGH	- - - - -	Mr. Harley.
Sir WALTER RALEIGH	- - - - -	Mr. Macready.
Lieutenant of the Tower	- - - - -	Mr. Thompson.
Officer	- - - - -	Mr. Evatt.

Women.

Queen ELIZABETH	- - - - -	Mrs. Pope.
Countess of RUTLAND	- - - - -	Mrs. Esten.
Countess of NOTTINGHAM	- - - - -	Mrs. Bernard.

Lords, Ladies, and Attendants.



THE
EARL OF ESSEX.

ACT I. SCENE I.

An Antichamber in the Palace. Enter BURLEIGH and RALEIGH.

Burleigh.

THE bill, at length, has pass'd opposing numbers,
Whilst crowds seditious clamour'd round the senate,
And headlong faction urg'd its force within.

Ral. It has, my lord.—The wish'd-for day is come,
When this proud idol of the people's hearts
Shall now no more be worshipp'd.—Essex falls.
My lord, the minute's near that shall unravel
The mystic schemes of this aspiring man.
Now fortune, with officious hand, invites us
To her, and opens wide the gates of greatness,
The way to power. My heart exults; I see,
I see, my lord, our utmost wish accomplish'd!
I see great Cecil shine without a rival,

And England bless him as her guardian saint,
Such potent instruments I have prepar'd,
As shall, with speed, o'erturn this hated man,
And dash him down, by proof invincible.

Bur. His day of glory now is set in night,
And all my anxious hopes, at last, are crown'd.
Those proofs against him, Raleigh——

Ral. All arrived.

Bur. Arrived! how? when?

Ral. This very hour, my lord:
Nay more, a person comes of high distinction,
To prove some secret treaties made by Essex,
With Scotland's monarch, and the proud Tyrone.

Bur. How say'st? to prove 'em?

Ral. Ay, my lord, and back'd
With circumstances of a stronger nature.
It now appears, his secretary Cuff,
With Blunt and Lee, were deep concern'd in this
Destructive scheme, contriv'd to raise this lord,
And ruin Cecil. O, it is a subtle,
And deep-laid mischief, by the earl contriv'd,
In hour malignant, to o'erturn the state,
And (horror to conceive!) dethrone the queen.

Bur. These gladsome tidings fly beyond my hopes!
The queen will listen now, will now believe,
And trust the counsel of her faithful Burleigh.
“Let this most lucky circumstance be kept
“A secret still from public observation.”—
Dispose 'em well, till kind occasion calls
Their office forth, lest prying craft mean-while

May tamper with their thoughts, and change their
minds:

Let them, like batteries conceal'd, appear
At once, both to surprise and to destroy.

Ral. This sudden shock, my lord, this weighty
stroke,
Must press him headlong down to deep destruction:
Indignant fate marks out this dreaded man,
And fortune now has left him.

Bur. Thank the changeling;
His servile faction soon will stand aghast,
And sink, at distance, from his threat'ning fall.

Ral. His headstrong friend, the bold Southampton
too,
Now finds his rash endeavours all defeated;
And storms at thee and the impeaching commons.

Bur. Let him rave on, and rage.—The lion in
The toils entangled, wastes his strength, and roars
In vain; his efforts but amuse me now.—

“*Ral.* What triumphs in my soul shall reign, to see
“ This sanguine and o'erbearing man brought down
“ Beneath my envy; nay, below my scorn.
“ How young ambition swells my rising hopes!
“ 'Tis Heaven, O Cecil, calls thro' England's voice,
“ And justice, bending from above, invites us.”

Enter Gentleman.

Gent. My lord, the lady Nottingham desires,
With much impatience, to attend your lordship.

Bur. What may the purport of her bus'ness be?

Her tender wishes are to Essex ty'd
 In love's soft fetters, and endearing bands :
 " For him, each melting thought awakes desire;
 " And all her soul is lavish'd on that lord,—
 " This unexpected visit much surprises me !
 " What can it mean? She would not come to pry
 " And pick out tales for Essex' ear!—Why let her;
 " I'm arm'd secure against her arts and cunning.
 " Besides, her errand comes too late; for now
 " Her minion's doom'd to fall."—Conduct her in.

[*Exit Gent.*

And you, my Raleigh, watch Southampton's steps;
 With care observe each movement of his friends;
 That no advantage on that side be lost. [*Exit Ral.*
 " Southampton's Essex' second self; he shares
 " His headlong councils, and adopts his schemes;
 " His daring heart, and bold, ungovern'd tongue,
 " Are both enlisted in the rash designs
 " Of this proud lord, nor knows a will but his :
 " A limb so fix'd must with the body fall."

Enter Lady NOTTINGHAM.

Not. Thrice hail to rescu'd England's guiding genius!

His country's guardian, and his queen's defence.
 Great Burleigh, thou whose patriot bosom beats
 With Albion's glory and Eliza's fame;
 Who shield'st her person, and support'st her throne;
 For thee, what fervent thanks, what offer'd vows,
 Do prostrate millions pay!

Bur. Bright excellence,
This fair applause too highly over-rates,
Too much extols, the low deserts of Cecil.

Not. What praises are too high for patriot worth;
Or what applause exceeds the price of virtue?
My lord, conviction has at last subdu'd me,
And I am honour's proselyte :—too long
My erring heart pursued the ways of faction ;
I own myself t' have been your bitt'rest foe,
And join'd with Essex in each foul attempt
To blast your honour, and traduce your fame.

Bur. Tho' ne'er my wishing heart could call you
friend,

Yet honour and esteem I always bore you ;
And never meant, but with respect to serve you.
" It grieves me, madam, to have thus offended,
" Where most my wishes labour'd to oblige.

" *Not.* I know your honour and your virtues well ;
" Your public plans, design'd for England's good,
" And all your private merit's weight. But, Oh,
" How blind is reason in the maze of passion !
" I sought your ruin, labour'd for your fall.

" But, if repentance may atone for guilt,
" Or self-reproach for sharpest penance pass,
" No mortal breast e'er felt more woe than mine,
" And Burleigh now may rank me for his friend.

" *Bur.* That such a worth of soul should be abus'd !
" Could I accuse my heart but of a thought
" To do you wrong ; if any purpose ever
" Against your welfare in my soul arise,

" That look'd with malice on your shining merit,
 " Your matchless beauty, or your brighter virtues,
 " Then let me live despis'd, a proverb made
 " To every passing slave; nay more, the scorn
 " And trampled footstool of the man I hate."

Not. It is enough, my lord, I know it well,
 And feel rekindling virtue warm my breast;
 Honour and gratitude their force resume
 Within my heart, and every wish is yours.

O Cecil, Cecil, what a foe hast thou,
 A deadly foe, whilst hated Essex lives!

Bur. I know it well, but can assign no cause.

Not. Ambition's restless hand has wound his
 thoughts

Too high for England's welfare; nay, the queen
 Scarce sits in safety on her throne, while he,
 Th' audacious Essex, freely treads at large,
 And breathes the common air, Ambition is
 The only god he serves, to whom he'd sacrifice
 His honour, country, friends, and every tie
 Of truth, and bond of nature; nay, his love.

Bur. "I find this bus'ness works as I would have it.

" [*Aside.*"]

The man that in his public duty fails,
 On private virtue will disdainful tread,
 As steps to raise him to some higher purpose;
 In vain each softer wish would plead with him,
 No tender movement in his soul prevails,
 And mighty love, who rules all nature else,
 Must follow here in proud ambition's train.

Not. Pronounce it not, my soul abhors the sound,
Like death.—Oh, Cecil, will you kindly lend
Some pity to a wretch like me?

Bur. Command,
Madam; my power and will are yours. “I feel
“Your wrongs, I feel the base returns you’ve met
“From this ungrateful and disloyal man,
“Tho’ oft your goodness screen’d him from reproof.
“Believe me worthy to partake your grievance,
“Accept my service, and employ my power.”

Not. Will Cecil’s friendly ear vouchsafe to bend
Its great attention to a woman’s wrongs,
Whose pride and shame, resentment and despair,
Rise up in raging anarchy at once,
To tear with ceaseless pangs my tortur’d soul?
Words are unequal to the woes I feel,
And language lessens what my heart endures.
Passion repuls’d with scorn, and proud disdain,
Recoils indignant on my shrinking soul,
Beats back my vital springs, and crushes life.

Bur. Madam, your wrongs, I must confess, are
great;
Yet still, I fear, you know not half his falsehood.
“Who, that had eyes to look on beauty; who,
“That had a heart to feel that beauty’s power;”
Who, but the false, perfidious Essex, could
Prefer to Nottingham a Rutland’s charms?
Start not—By Heav’n, I tell you nought but truth,
What I can prove, past doubt; that he receiv’d
The lady Rutland’s hand, in sacred wedlock,

The very night before his setting out
For Ireland.

Not. Oh, may quick destruction seize 'em!
May furies blast, and hell destroy their peace!
May all their nights——

Bur. I pray, have patience, madam,
Restrain awhile your rage; curses are vain.
But there's a surer method to destroy him;
And if you'll join with me, 'tis done: he falls.

Not. Ha! say'st thou, Burleigh! Speak, my ge-
nius, speak;
Be quick as vengeance' self to tell me how.

Bur. You must have heard the commons have im-
peach'd him,
And we have proofs sufficient for his ruin.
But the queen—you know how fair he stands
In her esteem; and Rutland too, his wife,
Hath full possession of the royal ear.
What then avail impeachments, or the law's
Severest condemnation, while the queen
May snatch him from the uplifted hand of justice?
Here then, my Nottingham, begins thy task:
Try ev'ry art t' incense the queen against him,
Then step between her and the lady Rutland,
“ Let not her fondness find the least access
“ To the queen's heart to counterwork our purpose.”
Observe Southampton too, with jealous eye;
Prevent, as much as possible, his suit;
For well I know he will not fail to try
His eloquence on the behalf of Essex.

Not. It shall be done ; his doom is fix'd ; he dies.
Oh, 'twas a precious thought ; I never knew
Such heart-felt satisfaction ! Essex dies,
And Rutland, in her turn, shall learn to weep.
The time is precious ; I'll about it strait.
Come, vengeance, come, assist me now to breathe
Thy venom'd spirit in the royal ear, [Exit *Not.*

Bur. There spoke the very genius of the sex.
A disappointed woman sets no bounds
To her revenge. Her temper's form'd to serve me.

Enter RALEIGH.

Ral. The lord Southampton, with ungovern'd rage,
Resents aloud his disappointed measures.
I met him in the outward court ; he seeks
In haste your lordship, and, forgetting forms,
Pursues me hither, and demands to see you.

Bur. Raleigh, 'tis well—Withdraw—Attend the
queen.

Leave me to deal with this o'erbearing man.

[Exit Raleigh.]

Enter SOUTHAMPTON.

South. Where is the man, whom virtue calls her
friend ?

I give you joy, my lord !—Your quenchless fury
At length prevails,—and now your malice triumphs.
You've hunted honour to the toil of faction,
And view his struggles with malicious joy.

Bur. What means my lord ?

South. Oh, fraud! shall valiant Essex
Be made a sacrifice to your ambition!
Oh, it smells foul indeed, of rankest malice,
And the vile stateman's craft. You dare not sure
Thus bid defiance to each shew of worth,
Each claim of honour: dare not injure thus
Your suffering country in her bravest son!

Bur. But why should stern reproach her angry
brow

Let fall on me? Am I alone the cause
That gives this working humour strength? Do I
Instruct the public voice to warp his actions?
Justice, untaught, shall poise th' impartial scales,
And every curious eye may mark the beam.

South. The specious shield, which private malice
bears,

Is ever blazon'd with some public good:
Behind that artful fence, skulk low, conceal'd
The bloody purpose, and the poison'd shaft;
Ambition there, and envy nestle close;
From whence they take their fatal aim unseen;
And honest merit is the destin'd mark.

Bur. "Your warm distemper'd zeal puts rashly by
"The cool directing hand of wholesome reason.
"No imputation foul shall rest on me;
"My honest purposes defy aloud
"The slander-spreading tongue of busy faction,
"To cast its venom on my fair report,
"Or tell posterity, thus Cecil did."
My country's welfare, and my queen's command,

Have ever been my guiding stars through life,
My sure direction still.—To these I now
Appeal;—from these, no doubt, this lord's miscon-
duct

Hath widely stray'd; and reason, not reviling,
Must now befriend his cause.

South. How ill had Providence
Dispos'd the suff'ring world's opprest affairs,
Had sacred right's eternal rule been left
To crafty politicians' partial sway!
Then power and pride would stretch th' enormous
grasp,

And call their arbitrary portion, justice:
Ambition's arm, by av'rice urg'd, would pluck
The core of honesty from virtue's heart,
And plant deceit and rancour in its stead:
Falsehood would trample then on truth and honour,
And envy poison sweet benevolence.
Oh, 'tis a goodly group of attributes,
And well befits some stateman's righteous rule!
Out, out upon such base and bloody doings!
The term of being is not worth the sin;
No human bosom can indure its dart.
Then put this cruel purpose from thee far,
Nor let the blood of Essex overwhelm thy soul.

Bur. 'Tis well, my lord! your words no comment
need;
"No doubt, they've well explain'd your honest mean-
ing;

“ ’Tis clear and full.—To parts, like yours, discretion

“ Would be a clog, and caution but incumbrance.”
Yet mark me well, my lord, the clinging ivy
With th’ oak may rise, but with it too must fall.

South. Thy empty threats, ambitious man, hurt not
The breast of truth. Fair innocence, and faith,
Those strangers to thy practis’d heart, shall shield
My honour, and preserve my friend.—In vain,
Thy malice, with unequal arm, shall strive
To tear the applauded wreath from Essex’ brow;
His honest laurel, held aloft by fame,
“ Above thy blasting reach, shall safely flourish,”
Shall bloom immortal to the latest times;
Whilst thou, amidst thy tangling snares involv’d,
Shall sink confounded, and unpitied fall.

Bur. Rail on, proud lord, and give thy choier vent:
It wastes itself in vain; the queen shall judge
Between us in this warm debate. To her
I now repair; and in her royal presence
You may approve your innocence and faith.
Perhaps you’ll meet me there.—Till then, farewell.
[Exit.]

South. Confusion wait thy steps, thou cruel monster!
My noble and illustrious friend betray’d,
By crafty faction and tyrannic power,
His sinking trophies, and his falling fame,
Oppress my very soul. I’ll to the queen,
Lay all their envy open to her view,
Confront their malice, and preserve my friend. [Exit.]

*The Queen discovered, sitting on her throne. RALEIGH,
Lords and attendants.*

Qu. Without consulting me! presumptuous man!
Who governs here?—What! am not I your queen?
You dar'd not, were he present, take this step.

Ral. Dread sovereign, your ever faithful commons
Have, in their gratitude and love for you,
Preferr'd this salutary bill against him.

Enter BURLEIGH.

Qu. You, my lord Burleigh, must have known of
this.

The commons here impeach the Earl of Essex
Of practising against the state and me.
Methinks I might be trusted with the secret.
Speak, for I know it well, 'twas thy contrivance.
Ha! was it not? You dare not say it was not.

Bur. I own my judgment did concur with theirs.
His crimes, I fear, will justify the charge,
And vindicate their loyalty and mine.

Qu. Ha! tell me not your smooth deceitful story!
I know your projects, and your close cabals.
You'd turn my favour into party feuds,
And use my sceptre as the rod of faction:
But Henry's daughter claims a nobler soul.
I'll nurse no party, but will reign o'er all,
And my sole rule shall be to bless my people:
Who serves them best has still my highest favour:
This Essex ever did.

Enter SOUTHAMPTON.

Behold, Southampton,

What a base portrait's here! The faithful Essex
Here drawn at large associating with rebels,
To spoil his country and dethrone his queen.

South. It is not like.—By Heav'n the hand of envy
Drew these false lines, distorted far from truth
And honour, and unlike my noble friend
As light to shade, or hell to highest heav'n.
Then suffer not, thou best of queens, this lord,
This valiant lord, to fall a sacrifice
To treachery and base designs; who now
Engages death in all his horrid shapes,
Amidst a hardy race, inur'd to danger;
But let him face to face, this charge encounter,
And every falsehood, like his foes, shall fly.

Qu. To me you seem to recommend strict justice,
In all her pomp of power. But are you sure
No subtle vice conceal'd assumes her garb?
Take heed, that malice does not wear the mask,
Nor envy deck her in the borrow'd guise.
“Rancour has often darken'd reason's eye,
“And judgment winks, when passion holds the scale.”
Impeach the very man to whom I owe
My brightest rays of glory! Look to it, lords,
Take care, be cautious on what ground you tread;
Let honest means alone secure your footing.
Raleigh and you withdraw, and wait our leisure.

[*Exeunt* Raleigh and *South.*]

Lord Burleigh, stay; we must with you have farther
Conf'rence.—I see this base contrivance plain.
Your jealousy and pride, your envy of
His shining merit, brought this bill to light.
But mark me, as you prize our high regard
And favour, I command you to suppress it:
Let not our name and power be embarrass'd
In your perplexing schemes. 'Twas you began,
And therefore you must end it.

Bur. I obey.

Yet humbly would intreat you to consider
How new, unpopular, this step must be,
To stand between your parliament's enquiry
And this offending lord.—We have such proofs—

Qu. Reserve your proofs to a more proper season,
And let them then appear. But once again
We charge you, on your duty and allegiance,
To stop this vile proceeding; and to wait
Till Essex can defend himself in person.
If then your accusations are of force,
The laws, and my consent, no doubt, are open,
He has my strict command, with menace mix'd,
To end effectually this hated war,
Ere he presume to quit the Irish coast.

Bur. Madam, my duty now compels me to—

Qu. No more! see that my orders be obey'd.

[*Exit Bur.*]

Essex a traitor!—it can never be—
His grateful and his honest soul disdains it.—
I know him hot, ambitious, rash, impatient;

But then he's firmly anchor'd in his duty:
 Tho' stormy passions toss him to and fro.
 Can he prove false? so high advanc'd, so honour'd,
 So near my favour—and—I fear so near
 My heart!—Impossible.—This Burleigh hates him,
 And, his rival, therefore would destroy him;
 But he shall find his narrow schemes defeated.
 In vain their fraudulent efforts shall combine
 To shake my settled soul, my firm design;
 Resolv'd to lift bright virtue's palm on high,
 Support her grandeur, and her foes defy. [Exit.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Enter BURLEIGH and RALEIGH.

Burleigh.

ESSEX arriv'd! Confusion to my hopes!
 His presence will destroy me with the queen.
 I much suspect he had some private notice,
 Perhaps, a punctual order, to return.
 He lurks too near her heart.—What's to be done?
 “ Prepare the witnesses with speed; apprize
 “ The lady Nottingham.—Southampton's pride,
 “ And Rutland's too, will lift the crest again.
 “ But fly, my Raleigh, send me Nottingham,
 “ [Exit Raleigh.
 “ We must alarm the queen with new commotions

“ In many parts of her dominions rais’d :
“ All this, and more, must now be pass’d for truth.
“ This sudden blow has struck me to the soul ;
“ ’Tis gone too far, he dies—proud Essex now,
“ Or Cecil falls.” Now is th’ important crisis—
Keep up the usual strength ; my better genius,
Direct my steps to crush my mortal foe.

Enter QUEEN and RALEIGH.

Qu. It cannot be ! Return’d without my leave !
Against my strict command !—Impossible !

Ral. Madam, the earl is now at court, and begs
An audience of your majesty.

Qu. Amazing !
What ! break his trust ! desert his high command,
Forsake his post, and disobey his queen !
’Tis false—invented all.—You wish it so.

Bur. Madam, I wish some other rumours false :
Reports, I fear, of great concern to you.

Qu. What rumours ? what reports ? your frown
would much
Denote : your preface seems important.—Speak.

Bur. Some new commotions are of late sprung up
In Ireland, where the west is all in arms,
And moves with hasty march to join Tyrone,
And all his northern clans. A dreadful power !
Nay more, we have advices from the borders
Of sudden risings, near the banks of Tweed !
’Tis thought, to favour an attempt from Scotland.
Mean while, Tyrone embarks six thousand men

To land at Milford, and to march where Essex
Shall join them with his friends.

Qu. In league with James !
And plotting with Tyrone ! It cannot be.
His very pride disdains such perfidy.
But is not Essex here without my leave !
Against my strict command ! that, that's rebellion,
The rest, if true or false, it matters not.
What's to be done ?—admit him to my presence ?
No, no—my dignity, my pride forbid it.
Ungrateful man, approach me not ; rise, rise,
Resentment, and support my soul ! Disdain,
Do thou assist me—Yes, it shall be so.

Bur. I see she muses deep ; her mind works up-
wards,
And paints its struggling efforts in her face.
Tyrone's invasion wakes her fear and anger,
And all her soul is one continued storm.

Qu. For once my pride shall stoop ; and I will see
This rash, audacious, this once favour'd man ;
But treat him as his daring crimes deserve.

Enter SOUTHAMPTON.

South. [*Kneeling.*] Permit me, madam, to approach
you thus ;
Thus lowly to present the humble suit
Of the much injur'd, faithful Earl of Essex,
Who dares not, unpermitted, meet your presence.
He begs, most gracious queen, to fall before
Your royal feet, to clear him to his sovereign,

Whom next to Heav'n he wishes most to please,
 Let faction load him with her labouring hand,
 His innocence shall rise against the weight,
 If but his gracious mistress deign to smile.

Qu. Let him appear.

Exit. South.

Now to thy trying task,
 My soul! Put forth, exert thy utmost strength,
 Nor let an injur'd queen be tame.—Lie still,
 My heart, I cannot listen to thee now.

Enter ESSEX and SOUTHAMPTON.

Essex. Forgive, thou injur'd majesty, thou best
 Of queens, this seeming disobedience. See,
 I bend submissive in your royal presence,
 With soul as penitent, as if before
 Th' all-searching eye of Heav'n. But, oh, that
 frown!

My queen's resentment wounds my inmost spirit,
 Strikes me like death, and pierces through my heart.

Qu. You have obey'd, my lord! you've serv'd me
 well!

My deadly foes are quell'd! and you come home
 A conqueror! Your country bids you welcome!
 And I, your queen, applaud!—Triumphant man!
 What! is it thus that Essex gains his laurels?
 What! is it thus you've borne my high commission?
 How durst you disregard your trusted duty.
 Desert your province, and betray your queen?

Essex. I came to clear my injur'd name from guilt,
 Imputed guilt, and slanderous accusations.

My shame was wafted in each passing gale,
Each swelling tide came loaded with my wrongs ;
And echo sounded forth, from faction's voice,
The traitor Essex.—Was't not hard, my queen,
That while I stood in danger's dreadful front,
Encountering death in every shape of terror,
And bleeding for my country ?——Was't not hard,
My mortal enemies at home, like cowards,
Shou'd in my absence basely blast my fame ?

Qu. It is the godlike attribute of kings
To raise the virtuous and protect the brave.
I was the guardian of your reputation,
What malice, or what faction then could reach you ?
My honour was expos'd, engag'd for yours :
But you found reason to dislike my care,
And to yourself assum'd the wrested office.

Essex. If aught disloyal in this bosom dwells,
If aught of treason lodges in this heart,
May I to guilt and lasting shame be wedded,
The sport of faction, and the mark of scorn,
The world's derision, and my queen's abhorrence,
Stand forth the villain, whose invenom'd tongue
Would taint my honour and traduce my name,
Or stamp my conduct with a rebel's brand !
Lives there a monster in the haunts of men,
Dares tear my trophies from their pillar'd base,
Eclipse my glory, and disgrace my deeds ?

Qu. This ardent language, and this glow of soul,
Were nobly graceful in a better cause ;
Where virtue warrants, and where truth inspires :

But injur'd truth, with brow invincible,
Frowns stern reproof upon the false assertion,
And contradicts it with the force of facts.
From me you have appeal'd, ungrateful man ;
The laws, not I, must listen to your plea.
Go, stand the test severe, abide the trial,
And mourn, too late, the bounty you abus'd.

Exeunt Queen, Southampton, &c.

Essex. Is this the just requital, then, of all
My patriot-toils and oft encounter'd perils,
Amidst th' inclemencies of camps and climes ?
Then be it so.—Unmov'd and dauntless, let me
This shock of adverse fortune firmly stand.
But yet, methinks, 'tis somewhat sudden too !
My greatness, now depriv'd of each support,
Which bore so long its envy'd weight aloft,
Must quick to ruin fall, and crush my hopes.

Enter SOUTHAMPTON.

South. Alas, my lord ! the queen's displeasure kindles
With warmth increasing ; whilst Lord Burleigh labours
To inflame her wrath, and make it still burn fiercer.

Essex. I scorn the blaze of courts, the pomp of
kings ;
I give them to the winds, and lighter vanity ;
Too long they've robb'd me of substantial bliss,
Of solid happiness, and true enjoyments.
But lead me to my mourning love ; alas !

She sinks beneath oppressing ills ; she fades,
She dies for my afflicting pangs, and seeks
Me, sorrowing, in the walks of woe.—Distraction!
Oh, lead me to her, to my soul's desire.

South. Let caution guide you in this dangerous step.
Consider well, my lord, the consequence—
For should the queen (forbid it Heaven !) discover
Your private loves, your plighted hands, no power
On earth could step between you and destruction.
“ Lock up this secret from the prying world.”

Enter BURLEIGH.

Bur. My lord of Essex, 'tis the queen's command,
That you forthwith resign your staff of office ;
And further, she confines you to your palace.

Essex. Welcome my fate. Let fortune do her utmost ;
I know the worst, and will confront her malice,
And bravely bear the unexpected blow.

Bur. The queen, my lord, demands your quick compliance.

Essex. Go, then, thou gladsome messenger of ill,
And, joyful, feast thy fierce rapacious soul
With Essex' sudden and accomplish'd fall.
The trampled corse of all his envy'd greatness,
Lies prostrate now beneath thy savage feet ;
But still th' exalted spirit mounts above thee.
Go, tell the queen thy own detested story :
Full in her sight disclose the snaky labyrinth

And lurking snares you plant in virtue's path,
To catch integrity's unguarded step.

Bur. How ill repaid are public toils and cares,
“ Where active honesty, with station join'd,
“ Incurs but calumny, and foul reproach!”
Your country has impeach'd, your queen accus'd you;
To these address your best defence, and clear
Your question'd conduct from disloyal guilt.
What answer to the queen shall I return?

Essex. My staff of office I from her receiv'd,
And will to her, and her alone, resign it.

Bur. This bold refusal will incense the queen.
This arrogance will make your guilt the stronger.
[*Exit.*

South. Sustain, my noble friend, thy wonted greatness ;

Collect thy fortitude, and summon all
Thy soul, to bear with strength this crushing weight,
Which falls severe upon thee; whilst my friendship
Shall lend a helping hand, and share the burthen.
I'll hence with speed, and to the queen repair,
And all the power of warmest words employ,
To gain you yet one audience more, and bring
Her majesty to milder thoughts. Farewell. [*Exit.*

Essex. As newly wak'd from all my dreams of glory,
Those gilded visions of deceitful joys,
I stand confounded at the unlook'd-for change,
And scarcely feel this thunder-bolt of fate.
The painted clouds, which bore my hopes aloft,
Alas, are now vanish'd to yielding air,

And I am fall'n indeed!—

How weak is reason, when affection pleads!
 How hard to turn the fond, deluded heart
 From flatt'ring toys, which sooth'd its vanity!
 The laurell'd trophy, and the loud applause,
 The victor's triumph, and the people's gaze;
 The high-hung banner, and recording gold,
 Subdue me still, still cling around my heart,
 And pull my reason down.

Enter RUTLAND.

Rut. Oh, let me fly
 To clasp, embrace, the lord of my desires,
 My soul's delight, my utmost joy, my husband!
 I feel once more his panting bosom beat;
 Once more I hold him in my eager arms,
 Behold his face, and lose my soul in rapture.

Essex. Transporting bliss! my richest, dearest treasure!

My mourning turtle, my long absent peace,
 Oh, come yet nearer, nearer to my heart!
 My raptur'd soul springs forward to receive thee:
 Thou heav'n on earth, thou balm of all my woe!

Rut. O, shall I credit then each ravish'd sense;
 Has pitying Heav'n consented to my prayer?
 It has, it has! my Essex is return'd!

But language poorly speaks the joys I feel;
 Let passion paint, and looks express my soul.

Essex. With thee, my sweetest comfort, I'll retire
 From splendid palaces, and glitt'ring throngs,

To live embosom'd in the shades of joy,
 Where sweet content extends her friendly arms,
 And gives encreasing love a lasting welcome.
 With thee, I'll timely fly from proud oppression,
 Forget our sorrows, and be bless'd for ever.

Rut. O, let us hence, beyond the reach of power;
 Where fortune's hand shall never part us more.
 In this calm state of innocence and joy,
 I'll press thee to my throbbing bosom close.
 Ambition's voice shall call in vain; the world,
 The thankless world, shall never claim thee more,
 And all thy business shall be love and me.

Essex. The queen, incens'd at my return, abandons me

To Cecil's malice, and the rage of faction.
 I'm now no more the fav'rite child of fortune:
 My enemies have caught me in the toil,
 And life has nothing worth my wish, but thee.

Rut. Delusive dream of fancied happiness;
 And has my fatal fondness then destroy'd thee?
 Oh, have I lur'd thee to the deadly snare
 Thy cruel foes have laid? "Oh, have I put
 "Thy life in peril? My officious tears
 "Would needs inform thee of their wicked schemes."
 I dreaded Cecil's malice, and my heart,
 Longing to see thee, with impatience listen'd
 To its own alarms; and prudence sunk beneath
 The force of love.

Essex. Forbear, my only comfort;
 Oh, tell me not of danger, death, and Burleigh;

Let every star shed down its mortal bane
On my unshelter'd head : whilst thus I fold
Thee in my raptur'd arms ; I'll brave them all,
Defy my fate and meet its utmost rigour.

Rut. Alas, my lord ! consider where we are.
Oh ! 'tis the queen's apartment ; death is here.
“ I came to thee through peril's ambush'd path,
“ and every danger risqu'd for thy embrace.”
Each precious moment is by fate beset,
And time stands trembling whilst we thus confer.

Essex. Then, let us hence from this detested place ;
My rescu'd soul disdains the house of greatness,
Where humble honesty can find no shelter.
From hence we'll fly, where love and virtue call ;
Where happiness invites——that wish of all :
With sweet content enjoy each blissful hour,
Beyond the smiles of fraud, or frowns of power.

[*Exeunt*]

ACT III. SCENE I.

Enter BURLEIGH and NOTTINGHAM.

Nottingham.

MY lord, I've sought you out with much impatience.
You've had an audience of the queen : what follow'd ?

Bur. Soon as I told her Essex had refus'd
To yield his dignities, and staff of office,

“ Against her high command, pronounc’d by me,”
She seem’d depriv’d of reason for a moment;
Her working mind betray’d contending passions,
Which, in her alter’d face, appear’d by turns.
She paus’d, like thunder in some kindling cloud,
The instant burst with dreadful fury forth:

“ And has th’ ungrateful wretch defy’d my man-
date?

“ The proud, audacious traitor scorn’d my power?”

“ He dares not, sure?—He dies—the villain dies.

“ Then, sudden, soften’d into milder sounds,

“ And call’d him rash, unhappy, gallant Essex!

“ On me her fury fell! my crafty plans

“ Against his reputation, fame and life,

“ Had driven him to extremes—my malice did it—

“ My envy was his bane; with all that passion

“ Or fury could suggest.—I begg’d to know

“ Her royal will concerning Essex; urg’d

“ Again his insolence.—Amaz’d, awhile

“ She stood, and wist not what to do.—At length

“ Collecting all her mind, these words she utter’d:”—

Let him to the Tow’r.—I instantly withdrew,

But soon was countermanded, and desir’d

To bring the Earl of Essex to her presence,

I like it not, and much I fear, she’ll stand

Between this high offender and the laws.

Not. Is Essex then secur’d;

Bur. Madam, he is;

And now comes guarded to the court.

Enter Gentleman.

Gent. Madam, the queen
Is in her closet, and desires to see you. [Exit.

Not. I attend her.

Bur. She wants, no doubt, to be advis'd by you.

Improve this fair occasion, urge it home;

"She must be quick'ned by repeated strokes

"Of fresh indignities, by Essex offer'd

"T' her royal person, and prerogative.

"Be circumspect and cautious! mark her well."

Not. I know her foible. Essex long has had

An interest in her heart, which nothing can

O'erturn, except his own ungovern'd spirit.

It is, indeed, the instrument by which

We work, and cannot fail, if rightly us'd.

Bur. Madam, the queen expects you instantly.

I must withdraw, and wait the earl's arrival. [Exeunt.

QUEEN discovered

Qu. Ill-fated, wretched man! perverse and obstinate!

He counterworks my grace and courts destruction.

He gives his deadly foes the dagger to

Destroy him, and defeats my friendly purpose,

Which would, by seeming to abandon, save him.

Nor will he keep the mask of prudence on

A moment's space.—What! must I bear this scorn?

No: let me all the monarch re-assume;

Exert my power, and be myself again.—

Oh, ill-performing, disobedient heart!

Why shrink'st thou, fearful, from thy own resolve?

Enter NOTTINGHAM.

Thou com'st in time; I'm much disturb'd, abus'd,
My Nottingham, and would complain to thee
Of insolence, neglect, and high contempt.

Essex presum'd to dictate laws within

My palace gates. How say'st thou, Nottingham?

Not. Surely, my gracious queen, it cannot be!

His heat and passion never cou'd impel him

To take so bold a step, to such rash guilt:

Methinks his very honour should prevent it.

Qu. Thy open, honest mind untutor'd seems

In life's ungrateful and degenerate school;

Where stubborn vice in every form appears,

Mocking correction's ineffectual rod.

It is, indeed, an evil hard to bear;

This haughty man has wanton'd with my grace,

Abus'd my bounty, and despis'd my favours.

“That giving goodness should profusely flow

“T' enrich the surly glebe, where only thorns

“And noxious weeds will spring!”

Resentment, then, shall in her turn prevail;

To angry laws I'll give this victim up.

Not. His conduct has, I fear, been too unguarded:

His hasty temper knows not where to stop.

Ambition is the spur of all his actions,

Which often drives him o'er his duty's limits :
(At least his enemies would have it so.)
But malice, madam, seldom judges right.

Qu. Oh, Nottingham! his pride is past enduring;
This insolent, audacious man forgets
His honour and allegiance;—and refus'd
To render up his staff of office, here,
'Beneath my very eye.

Not. Presumptuous man!
Your faithful subjects will resent this pride,
'This insolence, this treason to their queen;
They must, my gracious sovereign.—'Tis not safe
To shield him longer from their just resentment.
Then give him up to justice and the laws.

Qu. You seem well pleas'd to urge severity.—
Offended majesty but seldom wants
Such sharp advisers——Yet no attribute
So well befits th' exalted seat supreme,
And pow'rs disposing hand, as clemency.
Each crime must from its quality be judg'd;
And pity there should interpose, where malice
Is not th' aggressor. Hence! I'll hear no more.

Not. Madam, my sentiments were well intended;
Justice, not malice, mov'd my honest zeal.
My words were echoes of the public voice,
Which daily rises, with repeated cries
Of high complaint against this haughty lord.
I pity, from my heart, his rash attempts,
And much esteem the man.

Qu. Go, Nottingham,
My mind's disturb'd, and send me Rutland hither.
[*Exit Not.*

O, vain distinction of exalted state!
No rank ascends above the reach of care,
Nor dignity can shield a queen from woe.
Despotic nature's stronger sceptre rules,
And pain and passion in her right prevails.
Oh, the unpitied lot, severe condition,
Of solitary, sad, dejected grandeur!
Alone condemn'd to bear th' unsocial throb
Of heart-felt anguish, and corroding grief;
Depriv'd of what, within his homely shed,
The poorest peasant in affliction finds
The kind, condoling comfort of a dear
Partaking friend.—

Enter Countess of RUTLAND.

Rutland, I want thy timely
Counsel. I'm importun'd, and urg'd to punish—
But justice, sometimes, has a cruel sound,
“Where mercy may with prudence meet, and both
“Agree to soften rigour.”—Essex has,
No doubt, provok'd my anger, and the laws;
His haughty conduct calls for sharp reproof,
And just correction. Yet I think him guiltless
Of studied treason, or design'd rebellion.
Then tell me, Rutland, what the world reports,
What censure says of his unruly deeds.

Rut. The world, with envy's eye, beholds his merit:

Madam, 'tis malice all, and false report.

I know his noble heart, 'tis fill'd with honour:

No trait'rous taint has touch'd his generous soul;

His grateful mind still glows with pure affection;

And all his thoughts are loyalty and you.

Qu. I grant you, Rutland, all you say, and think
The earl possess'd of many splendid virtues.

What pity 'tis he should afford his foes

Such frequent, sad occasions to undo him!

Rut. What human heart can, unafflicted, bear

Such manly merit in distress: "such worth

"Betray'd; such valour in the toil," beset

By cruel foes, and faction's savage cry?

My good, my gracious mistress, stretch, betimes,

Your saving arm, and snatch him from destruction,
From deadly malice, treachery, and Cecil.

O, let him live, to clear his conduct up!

My gracious queen, he'll nobly earn your bounty,

And with his dearest blood deserve your mercy.

Qu. Her words betray a warm, unusual fervour;
Mere friendship never could inspire this transport.

[*Aside.*

I never doubted but the earl was brave;

His life and valiant actions all declare it:

I think him honest too, but rash and headstrong.

I gladly would preserve him from his foes,

And therefore am resolv'd once more to see him.

Rut. Oh, 'tis a godlike thought, and Heav'n itself
Inspires it. Sure some angel moves your heart,
Your royal heart, to pity and forgiveness.

This gracious deed shall shine in future story,
 And deck your annals with the brightest virtue;
 Posterity shall praise the princely act,
 And ages yet to come record your goodness.

Qu. I'll hear no more—Must I then learn from you
 To know my province, and be taught to move,
 As each designing mind directs?—Leave me.

Rut. Her frowns are dreadful, and her eye looks
 terror.

I tremble for my Essex. Save him, Heav'n! [*Exit.*

Qu. Her warmth has touch'd me home. My jealous
 heart,
 My fearful and suspicious soul's alarm'd.

Enter BURLEIGH, RALEIGH, and others.

Bur. The earl of Essex waits your royal will.

Qu. Let him approach—And now, once more sup-
 port

Thy dignity, my soul; nor yield thy greanness
 To strong usurping passion—But he comes.

Enter ESSEX, SOUTHAMPTON, Guards.

Essex. Permitted thus to bend, with prostrate heart,
 [*Kneels.*

Before your sacred majesty; I come,
 With every grateful sense of royal favour
 Deeply engrav'd within my conscious soul.

Qu. I sent my orders for your staff of office.

Essex. Madam, my envy'd dignities and honours
 I first from your own royal hand receiv'd;

And therefore justly held it far beneath me
To yield my trophies, and exalted power,
So dearly purchas'd in the field of glory,
To hands unworthy. No, my gracious queen,
I meant to lay them at your royal feet;
Where life itself a willing victim falls,
If you command.

Qu. High swelling words, my lord, but ill supply
The place of deeds, and duty's just demand.
In danger's onset, and the day of trial,
Conviction still on acting worth attends;
Whilst mere professions are by doubts encumber'd.

Essex. My deeds have oft declar'd, in danger's front,
How far my duty and my valour lead me.
Allegiance still my thirst of glory fir'd,
And all my bravely gather'd, envy'd laurels,
Were purchas'd only to adorn my queen.

Qu. "Yet fact o'er fallacy must still prevail,
"And eloquence to simple truth give way."
Your guilty scorn of my intrusted power,
When with my mortal foes you tamely dally'd,
By hardy rebels brav'd, you poorly sought
A servile pause, and begg'd a shameful truce.
Should Essex thus, so meanly compromise,
And lose the harvest of a plenteous glory,
In idle treaties, and suspicious parly?

Essex. Oh, deadly stroke! My life's the destin'd
mark.

The poison'd shaft has drank my spirits deep.
Is't come to this? Conspire with rebels! Ha!

I've serv'd you, madam, with the utmost peril,
And ever glory'd in th' illustrious danger !
Where famine fac'd me with her meagre mein, .
And pestilence and death brought up her train.
I've fought your battles, in despite of nature,
Where seasons sicken'd, and the clime was fate.
My power to parly, or to fight, I had
From you; the time and circumstance did call
Aloud for mutual treaty and condition ;
For that I stand a guarded felon here.—A traitor,
Hemm'd in by villains, and by slaves surrounded.

Qu. Shall added insolence, with crest audacious,
Her front uplift against the face of power.
Think not that injur'd majesty will bear
Such arrogance uncheck'd, or unchastis'd.
No public trust becomes the man, who treads,
With scornful steps, in honour's sacred path,
And stands at bold defiance with his duty.

Essex. Away with dignities and hated trust,
With flattering honours, and deceitful power !
Invert th' eternal rules of right and justice ;
Let villains thrive, and out-cast virtue perish ;
Let slaves be rais'd, and cowards have command.
Take, take your guady trifles back, those baits
Of vice, and virtue's bane.—'Tis clear, my queen,
My royal mistress, casts me off; nay, joins
With Cecil to destroy my life, and fame.

Qu. Presuming wretch ! audacious traitor !

Essex. Traitor !

Qu. Hence from my sight, ungrateful slave, and
learn

At distance to revere your queen.

Essex. Yes; let

Me fly beyond the limits of the world,
And nature's verge, from proud oppression far,
From malice, tyranny, from courts, from you.

Qu. Traitor! villain! [Strikes him.]

Essex. Confusion! what a blow!

Restrain, good Heav'n! down, down, thy rebel pas-
sion,

And, judgment, take the reins. Madam, 'tis well—
Your soldier falls degraded.

His glory's tarnish'd, and his fame undone.

O, bounteous recompence from royal hands!

But you, ye implements, beware, beware,

What honour wrong'd, and honest wrath can act.

Qu. What would th' imperious traitor do? My
life

Beyond thy wretched purpose stands secure.

Go, learn at leisure what your deeds deserve,

And tremble at the vengeance you provoke.

[*Exeunt all but Essex and Southampton.*]

Essex. Disgrac'd and struck! Damnation! Death
were glorious.

Revenge! revenge!

South. Alas, my friend! what would

Thy rage attempt? Consider well the great
Advantage now your rash, ungovern'd temper

Afford your foes. The queen incens'd, will let
Their fury loose.—I dread the dire event.

Essex. Has honest pride no just resentment left?
Nor injur'd honour feeling? Not revenge!
High Heaven shall bear, and earth regret my wrongs.
Hot indignation burns within my soul.
I'll do some dreadful thing—I know not what;
Some deeds as horrid as the shame I feel,
Shall startle nature, and alarm the world.
Then hence, like lightning, let me furious fly,
To hurl destruction at my foes on high;
Pull down oppression from its tyrant seat,
Redeem my glory, or embrace my fate. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Enter QUEEN and NOTTINGHAM.

Queen.

Not taken yet!

Not. No, madam; for the earl
Of Essex, leagu'd with desperate friends, made strong
And obstinate resistance; till, at length,
O'erpower'd by numbers, and increasing force,
He fled for shelter to a small retreat,
A summer-house upon the Thames; resolv'd
To perish, rather than submit to power.

Qu. “O, wretch detested! O, unheard of treason!
“Conspire against my life, within my view!

E ij

“ My reach! so near my very palace gates!

“ Perfidious monster!—What can prudence do,

“ Or human wisdom, more than judge from outside,

“ And flattering likeness? Kings can see no farther.

“ High Heav’n, alone, can read the heart, in all

“ Its utmost frauds, and mystic characters.”

Oh, where shall majesty bestow its favours,

Since Essex has a traitor prov’d to me,

Whose arm hath rais’d him up to power and greatness.

Whose heart has shar’d in all his splendid triumphs,

And feels, ev’n now, his trait’rous deeds with pity?

But hence with pity, and the woman’s pangs:

Resentment governs, and the queen shall punish.

Enter BURLEIGH.

Bur. Illustrious queen, the traitors all are seiz’d.

Th’ intelligence was true. Their black debates

Were held at Drury-house. The dire result

Was this: that Essex should alarm the citizens

To open mutiny, and bold rebellion.

“ On this pernicious errand went the earl,

“ Join’d by his desp’rate and seditious friends.”

Their purpose was to seize your royal palace,

And sacred person; but your faithful people,

As by one mind inform’d, one zeal inspir’d,

Rose up at once, and with their virtue quell’d them.

Qu. Thanks to their honest, to their loyal hearts.

But say, were any persons else concern’d,

Of high distinction, or of noted rank?

Bur. Yes, madam, many more, seduc’d of late,

'Mong whom the bold Southampton foremost stands,
 "Precipitate and rash; whose pow'r, tho' great,
 "Lags far behind his will to do you hurt."
 They're now our pris'ners, and are safe secur'd;
 But Essex, with Southampton, and the rest
 Of greater note, I would not dare dispose of
 Without your royal mandate; and they now
 Attend without, to know your final pleasure.

Qu. Is this the just return of all my care;
 My anxious toilsome days, and watchful nights?
 Have I sent forth a wish, that went not freighted
 With all my people's good? Or, have I life,
 Or length of days desir'd, but for their sake?
 The public good is all my private care.
 "Have I not ever thought the meanest subject,
 "Oppress'd by power, was, in his just complaint,
 "Above a king? What British bosom has
 "By foreign tyranny been griev'd, whose wrongs
 "I have not felt as mine, as mine redress'd?
 "Or have I, justly, made a single man
 "My foe?" Then could I think this grateful isle
 Contain'd one traitor's heart? But, least of all,
 That Essex' breast should lodge it? Call the monster,
 And let me meet this rebel face to face.
 Do you withdraw, and wait within our call.

[*Exeunt* BURLEIGH, &c.]

Enter ESSEX.

You see we dare abide your dang'rous presence,
 Tho' treason sits within your heart enthron'd,

And on that brow rebellion lours, where once
Such boasted loyalty was said to flourish.

How low the traitor can degrade the soldier!

Guilt glares in conscious dye upon thy cheek,

And inward horror trembles in thine eye.

How mean is fraud! How base ingratitude!

Essex. Forbear reproach, thou injur'd majesty,

Nor wound, with piercing looks, a heart already

With anguish torn, and bleeding with remorse.

Your awful looks, alone, are arm'd with death,

And justice gives them terror.

Qu. Hapless man!

What cause could prompt, what fiend could urge
thee on

To this detested deed? Could I from thee

Expect to meet this base return? from thee,

To whom I ought to fly, with all the confidence

That giving bounty ever could inspire,

Or seeming gratitude and worth could promise?

Essex. Alas! I own my crimes, and feel my treasons!

They press me down beyond the reach of pity.

Despair alone can shield me from myself.

Oh, let the little space I live be curs'd

With countless woes; let death, unpitied, come;

"My name be mention'd with the utmost scorn,"

If all my life can feel, or fame can suffer,

Can serve to mitigate my queen's displeasure.

Qu. My pride forbids me to approach thee more;

My pity, rather, would relieve thy sorrow.

“ I see conviction, and severe remorse,
“ Within thy mind at work. But much I fear
“ That death alone can calm the raging conflict.”

The people's clamours and my special safety,
Call loud for justice, and demand your life.

But if forgiveness from an injur'd queen
Can make the few short hours you live more easy,
I give it freely from my pitying heart ;
And wish my willing power could grant thee more.

Essex. Oh, sounds angelic ! goodness undeserv'd !
My swelling heart can keep no bounds, my soul
Flows o'er.—And will my gracious queen forgive
me ?

Oh, let me prostrate thus before you fall,
My better angel, and my guardian genius !
Permit me, royal mistress, to announce
My faithful sentiments, my soul's true dictates ;
Vouchsafe your Essex but this one request,
This only boon, he'll thank you with his last,
His dying breath, and bless you in his passage.

Qu. Rise, my lord.

If aught you have to offer can allay
Your woes, and reconcile you to your fate,
Proceed ;—and I with patient ear will listen.

Essex. My real errors, and my seeming crimes
Would weary mercy, and make goodness poor ;
And yet the source of all my greatest faults
Was loyalty misled, and duty in extreme.
So jealous was my sanguine heart, so warm
Affection's zeal, I could not bear the least

Suspicion of my duty to my queen.
 This drove me from my high command in Ireland;
 This, too, impell'd me to that rude behaviour
 Which justly urg'd the shameful blow I felt;
 And this (O, fatal rashness!) made me think
 My queen had given her Essex up, a victim
 To statesmen's schemes, and wicked policy.
 Stung by that piercing thought, my madness flew
 Beyond all bounds, and now, alas! has brought me
 To this most shameful fall; and, what's still worse,
 My own reproaches, and my queen's displeasure.

Qu. Unhappy man! My yielding soul is touch'd,
 And pity pleads thy cause within my breast.

Essex. Say but, my gracious sovereign, ere I go
 For ever from your presence, that you think me
 Guiltless of all attempts against your throne,
 And sacred life. Your faithful Essex ne'er
 Could harbour in his breast so foul a thought.
 Believe it not, my queen. By Heav'n, I swear,
 When in the highest pitch of glory rais'd,
 The splendid noon of fortune's brightest sunshine,
 Not ages of renown could yield me half
 The joy, nor make my life so greatly blest,
 As saving yours, tho' for a single hour.

Qu. My lord, I think you honest. Nay, I own,
 Whatever coldness I put on, was meant
 To save you from the malice of your foes.
 I judg'd your crimes, what you yourself pronounc'd
 'em,
 The rash effect of an intemp'rate zeal.

Essex. Was ever wretch like Essex thus undone
By goodness in excess, and lavish'd grace !
Oh, I could tear my erring heart, with these
Revenging hands !—What blessings have I lost !
What clemency abus'd !—Now could I wish
For lengthen'd life—indeed for endless years ;
A whole eternity's too short, to shew
My pious sorrow, and atone my folly,

Qu. “ Too well the passage to my heart he finds :
“ And pity's hand let's in the dangerous guest.
“ How weak is reason when oppos'd to nature !”

[*Aside.*

My lord, I would convince you that I still
Regard your life, and labour to preserve it ;
But cannot screen you from a public trial.
With prudence make your best defence : but should
Severity her iron jurisdiction
Extend too far, and give thee up condemn'd
To angry laws, thy queen will not forget thee.
Yet, lest you then shou'd want a faithful friend,
(For friends will fly you in the time of need),
Here, from my finger take this ring, a pledge
Of mercy ; having this, you ne'er shall need
An advocate with me ; for whensoever
You give, or send it back, by Heav'n, I swear
As I do hope for mercy on my soul,
That I will grant whatever boon you ask.

Essex. Oh, grace surprising ! most amazing goodness !

Words cannot paint the transports of my soul!
Let me receive it on my grateful knees,
At once to thank and bless the hand that gives it.

Qu. Depend, my lord, on this; 'twixt you and me
This ring shall be a private mark of faith

[*Gives the ring.*]

Inviolate. Be confident, cheer up,
Dispel each melancholy fear, and trust
Your sovereign's promise; she will ne'er forsake you.

Essex. Let Providence dispose my lot as 'twill,
May watchful angels ever guard my queen;
May healing wisdom in her counsels reign,
And firm fidelity surround her throne;
May victory her dreaded banners bear,
And joyful conquests crown her soldiers' brow;
Let every bliss be mingled in her cup,
And Heaven at last become her great reward! [*Exit.*]

Qu. 'Tis done;
And yet foreboding terrors shake my heart.
Something sits heavy here, and presses down
My spirits with its weight. What can it mean?
Suppose he is condemn'd; my royal word
Is plighted for his life; his enemies,
No doubt, will censure much.—No matter; let 'em;
I know him honest, and despise their malice.
“Unhappy state, where mercy and compassion
Too often meet with clamour and reproach!
“But princes must endure, for public good,
“The narrow censures of misguiding crowds.”

Enter Countess of Rutland.

Rut. Where is the queen? I'll fall before her feet
Prostrate, implore, besiege her royal heart,
And force her to forgive.

Qu. What means this frenzy?

Rut. Oh, gracious queen, if ever pity touch'd
Your generous breast, let not the cruel axe
Destroy his precious life; preserve my Essex,
"Preserve, from shameful death, the noble, loyal,
"Oh, save the brave, the best of subjects.—Save"
My life, my hope, my joy, "my all," my husband!

Qu. Husband!—What sudden deadly blow is this!
Hold up, my soul, nor sink beneath this wound.
You beg a traitor's life!

Rut. Oh, gracious queen!
He ever lov'd—was ever faithful, brave—
If nature dwells about your heart, oh, spurn
Me not! My lord! my love! my husband bleeds!

Qu. Take her away.

Rut. "I cannot let you go."
"Hold off your hands"—Here on this spot I'll fix,
Here lose all sense. Still let me stretch these arms,
Inexorable queen! he yet may live.
Oh, give him to my poor afflicted heart!
One pitying look, to save me from distraction.

Qu. I'll hear no more. I'm tortur'd—take her
hence.

Rut. Nay, force me not away.—Inhuman wretches!
Oh, mercy, mercy!—Then to thee, good Heav'n,

(My queen, my cruel queen, denies to hear me)
To thee I call, to thee for mercy bend.
Melt down her bosom's frozen sense to feel
Some portion of my deadly grief, my fell
Distraction.—Turn, oh, turn, and see a wife,
A tortur'd wife——

Qu. Why am I not obey'd?

Rut. Nay, do not thus

Abandon me to fell despair. Just Heaven,
That sees my sorrows, will avenge the wrong,
This cruel wrong, this barbarous tyranny. [*Forced off.*]

Qu. Wedded to Rutland! Most unhappy pair!
And, oh, ill-fated queen! Never till now
Did sorrow settle in my heart its throne.
Now black despair its cloudy curtain draws
Around thy setting peace, where joy, alas!
No more shall dawn, nor smiling hope return.
Recall my pledge of safety from his hands,
And give him up to death!——But life or death
To me is equal now. “Distraction dwells
“Within my tortur'd soul, and furies rend it.”
Unhappy state, where peace shall never come!
One fatal moment has confirm'd my doom,
Turn'd all my comfort to intestine strife,
And fill'd with mortal pangs my future life. [*Exit.*]

ACT V. SCENE I.

Enter RALEIGH and Lieutenant of the Tower.

Raleigh.

THEIR peers, with much indulgence, heard their plea,
And gave them ample scope for their defence;
But nought avail'd, their crimes were too notorious,
They bore their sentence with becoming spirit;
And here's the royal mandate for their deaths.
The lady Nottingham!—What brings her hither?

Enter Lady NOTTINGHAM.

Not. Lieutenant, lead me to the Earl of Essex,
I bring a message to him from the queen.

Lieut. He's with his friend, the brave Southamp-
ton, madam,
Preparing now for his expected fate.

But I'll acquaint his lordship with your pleasure. [*Ex.*]

Ral. What means this message? Does the queen
relent?

Not. I fear she does: “for such a war of passions,
“ Such varying tumults never strove within
“ Her breast till now. Sometimes she rails at Essex,
“ And calls him villain, traitor, dooms him dead;
“ Yet, in a moment, turns again to pity.
“ At length she sent me to th' ungrateful earl,
“ To learn if he could offer aught that might
“ Induce her royal mercy to forgiveness.”

Go you to court, for Cecil there expects you.
I've promised to acquaint him with what passes
'Twixt me and Essex ere I see the queen.

Ral. Madam, I go.

[*Exit.*

Not. Now, vengeance, steel my heart!
Offended woman, whilst her pride remains,
To malice only and revenge will bow,
And every virtue at that altar sacrifice.
But see, he comes, with manly sorrow clad.
There was a time, that presence cou'd subdue
My pride, and melt my heart to gentle pity.
I then could find no joy but in his smiles;
And thought him lovely as the summer's bloom;
But all his beauties are now hateful grown.

Enter ESSEX.

Essex. Whether you bring me death or life I know
not.

But, if strict friendship and remembrance past
May aught presage to my afflicted heart,
Sure mercy only from those lips should flow,
And grace be utter'd from that friendly tongue.

Not. My lord, I'm glad you think me still your
friend.

I come not to upbraid but serve you now;
And pleas'd I am to be the messenger
Of such glad tidings, in the day of trouble,
As now I bring you. When the queen had heard
That by the lords you were condemn'd to die,
She sent me, in her mercy, here, to know

If you had aught to offer that might move
Her royal clemency to spare your life.

Essex. Could any circumstance new lustre add
To my dread sovereign's goodness, 'tis the making
The kind, the generous Nottingham its messenger.
Oh, madam? could my glowing heart express
Its grateful sentiments, 'twould speak such language
As angels utter; when they praise their Maker.

Not. 'Tis well, my lord; but there's no time to
spare,
The queen impatient waits for my return.

Essex. My heart was wishing for some faithful friend,
And bounteous Heav'n hath sent thee to my hopes.
Know then, kind Nottingham, for now I'll trust
Thee with the dearest secret of my life;
'Tis not long since the queen (who well foresaw
To what the malice of my foes would drive me)
Gave me this ring, this sacred pledge of mercy;
And with it made a solemn vow to Heav'n,
That, whensoever I should give or send
It back again, she'd freely grant whate'er
Request I then shou'd make.

Not. Give, give it me,
My lord, and let me fly on friendship's wings,
To bear it to the queen, and to it add
My prayers and influence to preserve thy life.

Essex. O! take it then—it is the pledge of life,
The precious spring that drives my vital stream
Around, and keeps my heart still warm: "it is
" The door of breath, the hope of joy, the shield

“Of friendship.”—O! it is my dear Southampton’s
 Last, last remaining stay, his thread of being,
 Which more than worlds I prize.—O, take it then,
 Take it, thou guardian angel of my life,
 And offer up the incense of my pray’r!
 O beg, intreat, implore her majesty,
 From public shame, and ignominious death,
 And from th’ obdurate axe, to save my friend.

Not. My lord, with all the powers that nature gave,
 And friendship can inspire, I’ll urge the queen
 To grant you your request.

Essex. Kind Nottingham,
 Your pious offices shall ever be
 My fervent theme; and if my doubtful span
 Relenting Heav’n should stretch to years remote,
 Each passing hour shall still remind my thoughts,
 And tell me that I owe my all to thee:
 My friend shall thank you too for lengthen’d life.
 And now I fly with comfort to his arms,
 To let him know the mercy that you bring. [*Exit.*]

“*Not.* Yes, you shall feel my friendship’s weight
 fall heavy

“Upon your guilty soul, ungrateful man!
 “Your false, disdainful heart shall pay the fine
 “Of love neglected, and of beauty scorn’d.” [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

The Court. Enter QUEEN and BURLEIGH.

Qu. Ha! is not Nottingham return’d?

Bur. No, Madam.

Qu. Dispatch a speedy messenger to haste her.
My agitated heart can find no rest.
So near the brink of fate—unhappy man!

Enter NOTTINGHAM.

How now, my Nottingham, what news from Essex?
What says the earl?

Not. I wish, with all my soul,
Th' ungrateful task had been another's lot.
I dread to tell it—lost, ill-fated man!

Qu. What means this mystery, this strange behaviour?

Pronounce—declare at once; what said the earl?

Not. Alas, my queen, I fear to say; his mind
Is in the strangest mood, that ever pride
On blackest thoughts begot. He scarce would speak;
And when he did, it was with sullenness,
With hasty tone, and down cast look.

Qu. Amazing!

Not feel the terrors of approaching death!
Nor yet the joyful dawn of promis'd life!

Not. He rather seem'd insensible to both,
And with a cold indifference heard your offer;
Till warming up, by slow degrees, resentment
Began to swell his restless, haughty mind,
And proud disdain provok'd him to exclaim
Aloud, against the partial power of fortune,
And faction's rage. I begg'd him to consider

His sad condition nor repulse with scorn
The only hand that could preserve him.

Qu. Ha!

What! Said he nothing of a private import?
No circumstance—no pledge—no ring?

Not. None, madam,
But with contemptuous front disclaim'd at once
Your proffer'd grace; and scorn'd, he said, a life
Upon such terms bestow'd.

Qu. Impossible!

Could Essex treat me thus? You basely wrong him,
And wrest his meaning from the purpos'd point.
Recall betimes the horrid words you've utter'd;
Confess, and own the whole you've said was false.

Not. Madam, by truth, and duty both compell'd,
Against the pleadings of my pitying soul,
I must declare (Heav'n knows with what reluctance)
That never pride insulted mercy more.
He ran o'er all the dangers he had past;
His mighty deeds; his service to the state;
Accus'd your majesty of partial leaning
To favourite lords, to whom he falls a sacrifice;
Appeals to justice, and to future times,
How much he feels from proud oppression's arm;
Nay, something too he darkly hinted at,
Of jealous disappointment, and revenge.

Qu. Eternal silence seal thy venom'd lips!
What hast thou utter'd, wretch, to rouse at once
A whirlwind in my soul, which roots up pity,
And destroys my peace?

“ Ha ! he defies me then ! Audacious traitor ! ”
 Let him this instant to the block be led. [*Exit Not.*
 Upbraid me with my fatal fondness for him !
 Ungrateful, barbarous ruffian ! Oh, Elizabeth !
 Remember now thy long establish'd fame,
 Thy envy'd glory, and thy father's spirit.
 Accuse me of injustice too, and cruelty !
 Yes, I'll this instant to the Tower, forget
 My regal state, and to his face confront him :
 Confound th' audacious villain with my presence,
 And add new terrors to th' uplifted axe. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

The Tower. ESSEX and SOUTHAMPTON discovered.

Essex. Oh, name it not ! my friend shall live, he
 shall ;

I know her royal mercy, and her goodness,
 Will give you back to life, to length of days,
 And me to honour, loyalty, and truth.
 Death is still distant far.

South. In life's first spring
 Our green affections grew apace and prosper'd ;
 The genial summer swell'd our joyful hearts,
 To meet and mix each growing fruitful wish.
 We're now embark'd upon that stormy flood
 Where all the wise and brave are gone before us,
 Ere since the birth of time, to meet eternity.
 And what is death, did we consider right ?

Shall we, who sought him in the paths of terror,
And fac'd him in the dreadful walks of war,
Shall we astonish'd shrink, like frightened infants,
And start at scaffolds and their gloomy trappings?

Essex. Yet, still I trust long years remain of friendship.

Let smiling hope drive doubt and fear away,
And death be banish'd far; where creeping age,
Disease, and care, invite him to their dwelling.
I feel assurance rise within my breast,
That all will yet be well.

South. Count not on hope——

We never can take leave, my friend, of life,
On nobler terms. Life! what is life? A shadow!
Its date is but th' immediate breath we draw;
Nor have we surety for a second gale;
Ten thousand accidents in ambush lie
For the embody'd dream.

A frail and fickle tenement it is,
Which, like the brittle glass that measures time,
Is often broke, ere half its sands are run.

Essex. Such cold philosophy the heart disdains,
And friendship shudders at the moral tale.
My friend, the fearful precipice is past,
And danger dare not meet us more. Fly swift,
Ye better angels, waft the welcome tidings
Of pardon to my friend; of life and joy.

Enter Lieutenant.

Lieut. I grieve to be the messenger of woe.

But must, my lords, intreat you to prepare
For instant death. Here is the royal mandate
That orders your immediate execution.

Essex. Immediate execution!—What, so sudden!
No message from the queen, or Nottingham?

Lieut. None, sir.

Essex. Deluded hopes! Oh, worse than death!
Perfidious queen, to make a mock of life!
My friend, my friend destroy'd! Oh! piercing
thought!

Oh, dismal chance!—In my destruction ruin'd!
In my sad fall undone! Why could not mine,
My life atone for both? My blood appease?
Can you, my friend, forgive me?

South. Yes, O yes,
My bosom's better half, I can.—With thee,
I'll gladly seek the coast unknown, and leave
The lessening mark of irksome life behind.
With thee, my friend, 'tis joy to die! 'tis glory!
For who would wait the tardy stroke of time,
Or cling, like reptiles, to the verge of being,
When we can bravely leap from life at once,
And spring triumphant in a friend's embrace?

Enter RALEIGH.

Ral. To you my lord Southampton, from the queen
A pardon comes: your life her mercy spares.

Essex. For ever blest be that indulgent power
Which saves my friend! This weight ta'en off, my soul
Shall upward spring, and mingle with the blest.

South. All-ruling Heavens, can this, can this be just?

Support me; hold, ye straining heart strings, hold,
And keep my sinking heart from dissolution.

Oh, 'tis too much for mortal strength to bear,
Or thought to suffer! No, I'll die with thee.

They shall not part us, Essex.

Essex Live, Oh, live,

Thou noblest, bravest, best of men and friends,

Whilst life is worth thy wish, 'till time and thou

Agree to part and nature send thee to me;

Thou gen'rous soul, farewell!—Live, and be happy;

And, Oh! may life make largely up to thee

Whatever blessing fate has thus cut off

From thy departing friend!

Lieut. My lord, my warrant

Strictly forbids to grant a moment's time.

South. Oh, must we part for ever?—Cruel fortune!

Wilt thou then tear him hence?—"Severe divorce!"

Let me cling round thy sacred person still,

Still clasp thee to my bosom close, and keep

Stern fate at distance.

Essex. Oh, my friend we'll meet

Again, where virtue finds a just reward,

Where factious malice never more can reach us,

Recall thy reason, be thyself once more.—

I fear it not.—This hideous monster, death,

When seen at distance, shock's weak nature's eye;

But reason, as it draws more near, defies it.—

I thank thy sorrows, but cou'd spare 'em now.

I need not bid thee guard my fame from wrongs :
And, Oh ! a dearer treasure to thy care
I trust, than either life or fame—my wife !
Her bitter sorrows pierce my soul ; for her
My heart drops blood !—Oh, she will want a friend !
Then take her to thy care ; do thou pour balm
On her deep wounded spirit, and let her find
My tender helps in thee.—I must be gone,
My ever faithful, and my gallant friend.—
I pr'ythee leave this woman's work.—Farewell !
Take this last, dear embrace.—Farewell for ever !

South. My bursting breast ! I fain would speak
but words

Are poor——Farewell !——

But we shall meet again, embrace in one
Eternal band, which never shall be loos'd. [*Exit.*

Essex. To death's concluding stroke, lead on, Lieu-
tenant.

My wife !—Now reason, fortitude, support me !
For now, indeed, comes on my sorest trial.

Enter Countess of RUTLAND.

Oh, thou last, dear reserve of fortune's malice !
For fate can add no more—Oh, com'st thou then
In this dread hour, when all my straining thoughts
Are struggling in the tenderest ties of nature !
Oh, com'st thou now t' arrest my parting soul,
And force it back to life !

Rxt. Thou sole delight,
Thou only joy which life cou'd ever give,

Or death deprive me of ; my wedded lord !
I come with thee determined to endure
The utmost rigour of our angry stars ;
To join thee, fearless, in the grasp of death,
And seek some dwelling in a world beyond it.

Essex. Too much, thou partner of this dismal hour,
Thy gen'rous soul would prompt thee to endure ;
Nor can thy tender, trembling heart sustain it.
Long years of bliss remain in store for thee ;
And smiling time his treasures shall unfold
To bribe thy stay !

Rut. Thou cruel comforter !
Alas ! what's life, what's hated life to me :
“ Can aught beneath this starry hemisphere,
“ Which earth's extent, and nature's wealth can yield,
“ Which proud ambition stretches to enjoy,
“ Or passion pants for, recompense thy loss ? ”
Alas ! this universe, this goodly frame,
Shall all as one continued curse appear,
And every object blast, when thou art gone.

Essex. Oh, strain not thus the little strength I've left,
The weak support that holds up life, to bear
A few short moments more, its weight of woe,
Its loss of thee. Oh, turn away those eyes,
Nor with that look melt down my fix'd resolve ;
And yet a little longer let me gaze
On that lov'd form. Alas ! I feel my sight
Grows dim, and reason from her throne retires ;
For pity's sake, let go my breaking heart,
And leave me to my fate.

Rut. Why wilt thou still
Of parting talk, since life its thousand gates
Unbars to let us through together? "Death
"Is but a step that reaches to eternity."
Oh, that the friendly hand of Heav'n would snatch
Us both at once, above the distant stars,
Where fortune's venom'd shafts can never pierce,
Nor cruel queens destroy!—"Nay, look not so."

Essex. The awful Searcher, whose impartial eye
Explores the secrets of each human heart,
And every thought surveys, can witness for me,
How close thy image clings about my soul:
Retards each rising wish, and draws me back
To life, entangl'd by that lov'd idea.
When fell necessity those ties shall break,
For quickly break they must—when I from earth
On faith's white angel wings to Heaven shall soar,
Thy lasting form shall still my mind possess,
Where bless supreme each faculty o'erwhelms,
And raptur'd angels glow.

Lieut. My lord, "the time
"Too far is stretch'd;" it now grows late.

Essex. Lead on.

Rut. Stay, stay, my love! my dearest, dying lord!
Ah, whither wouldst thou go? Ah, do not leave me!
Alas! I'll hasten to attend your flight;
And nature gives consent we should not part.
I feel each faculty for fate prepare,
And my quick soul would fain set out before you.
"Oh, precious pangs!—Oh, dear distress! still closer

“ To thy quick throbbing heart let mine complain,
“ And on thy labouring bosom breathe my last !”

[*Faints.*

Essex. Thou sinking excellence ! thou matchless woman !

Shall fortune rob me of thy dear embrace,
Or earth's whole power, or death divide us now !
Stay, stay, thou spotless, injur'd saint, and take——

Lieut. My lord, already you have been indulg'd
Beyond what I can warrant by my orders.

Essex. Oh, let me on her dying bosom fall,
Embrace her spotless form !—One moment more
Afford me to my sorrows——Oh, look there !
Cou'd bitter anguish pierce your heart, like mine,
You'd pity now the mortal pangs I feel,
The throbs that tear my vital strings away,
And rend my agonizing soul.

Lieut. My lord——

Essex. But one short moment, and I will attend.
Ye sacred ministers that virtue guard,
And shield the righteous in the paths of peril,
Restore her back to life, and lengthen'd years
Of joy ; dry up her bleeding sorrows all !
Oh, cancel from her thoughts this dismal hour,
And blot my image from her sad remembrance !
'Tis done.——

And now, ye trembling cords of life, give way :
Nature and time, let go your hold ; eternity
Demands me. [Exeunt *Essex and Lieutenant.*

“ *Woman.* She returns to life ; see ! help !”

Rut. Where has my lost, benighted soul been wand'ring?

What means this mist that hangs about my mind,
Through which reflection's painful eye discerns
Imperfect forms, and horrid shapes of woe?
The cloud dispels, the shades withdraw, and all
My dreadful fate appears.—Oh, where's my lord,
My life! my Essex! Oh, whither have they ta'en
him?

Enter QUEEN and Attendants.

Qu. To execution! Fly with lightning's wing,
And save him. "Ha! by whose command was this?"
"Stop, stop the fatal blow.—My fears were true."

[Exit one of the Attendants.]

Rut. Thou saving angel, sent from Heav'n! my
queen,
My gracious queen, "be quick!—the bloody Bur-
leigh!

"A moment may destroy him! Stretch thy arm,
"Defend, defend!" O, snatch him from the blow!
Preserve my husband! "O, Elizabeth,
"Look down upon me. Angels move her heart
"To pity; save him, save him, gracious queen!"

Qu. Be calm, he shall not die. Rise up. I came
To save his life.

Rut. 'Tis mercy's voice that speaks.
My Essex shall again be mine. My queen,
My bounteous, gracious queen, has said the word.
May troops of angels guard thy sacred life,

And, in thy latest moments, waft thy soul
To meet that mercy in the realms of joy,
Which now thy royal goodness grants to me!

Enter BURLEIGH.

Bur. Madam, your orders came, alas! too late.
Ere they arriv'd the axe had fallen on Essex.

Rut. Ha! dead! What hell is this that opens round
me?

What fiend art thou that draws the horrid scene?
Ah, Burleigh! bloody murd'rer, where's my husband!

"Oh! where's my lord, my Essex?"
Destruction seize and madness rend my brain!
See, see, they bend him to the fatal block;
Now, now the horrid axe is lifted high,
It falls, it falls; he bleeds, he bleeds; he dies!

Qu. Alas, her sorrows pierce my suffering heart.

Rat. Eternal discord tear the social world,
"And nature's laws dissolve! expunge, erase
"The hated marks of time's engraving hand,
"And every trace destroy!" Arise, despair,
"Assert thy rightful claim," possess me all!
Bear, bear me to my murder'd lord, to clasp
His bleeding body in my dying arms,
And in the tomb embrace his dear remains,
And mingle with his dust for ever. [Exit.

Qu. Hapless woman!
She shall henceforth be partner of my sorrows;
And we'll contend who most shall weep for Essex.

Oh, quick to kill, and ready to destroy, [To Bur.
Cou'd no pretext be found, no cause appear,
To lengthen mercy out a moment more,
And stretch the span of grace? Oh, cruel Burleigh!
This, this was thy dark work, unpitying man!

Bur. My gracious mistress, blame not thus my duty,
My firm obedience to your high command.
The laws condemn'd him first to die; nor think
I stood between your mercy and his life.
It was the lady Nottingham, not I.
Herself confess'd it all in wild despair,
That from your majesty to Essex sent,
With terms of proffer'd grace, she then receiv'd
From his own hand a fatal ring, a pledge
It seems of much importance, which the earl
With earnest suit, and warm entreaty, begg'd her,
As she would prize his life, to give your majesty.
In this she fail'd—In this she murder'd Essex.

Qu. Oh, barbarous woman!
Surrounded still by treachery and fraud!
“What bloody deed is this! Thou injur'd Essex!”
My fame is soil'd to all succeeding times:
But Heav'n alone can view my breaking heart;
Then let its will be done,—

From hence, let proud, resisting mortals know
The arm parental, and th' indulgent blow.
To Heav'n's corrective rod submissive bend;
Adore its wisdom, on its power depend;
Whilst ruling justice guides eternal sway,
Let nature tremble, and let man obey.

EPILOGUE.

BY AN UNKNOWN HAND.

Spoken originally by Mrs. CIBBER.

*NEWS! News! good folks, rare news, and you shall
know it.—*

I've got intelligence about our poet.

Who do you think he is?—You'll never guess;

An Irish Bricklayer, neither more nor less:

And now the secret's out, you cannot wonder,

That in commencing bard he made a blunder.

Has he not left the better for the worse,

In quitting solid brick for empty verse?

Can he believe th' example of Old Ben,

Who chang'd, like him, the trowel for the pen,

Will in his favour move your critic bowels?—

You rather wish, most poets pens were trowels.

One man is honest, sensible, and plain,

Nor has the poet made him pert, in vain:

No beau, no courtier, nor conceited youth;

But then so rude, he always speaks the truth:

I told him he must flatter, learn address,

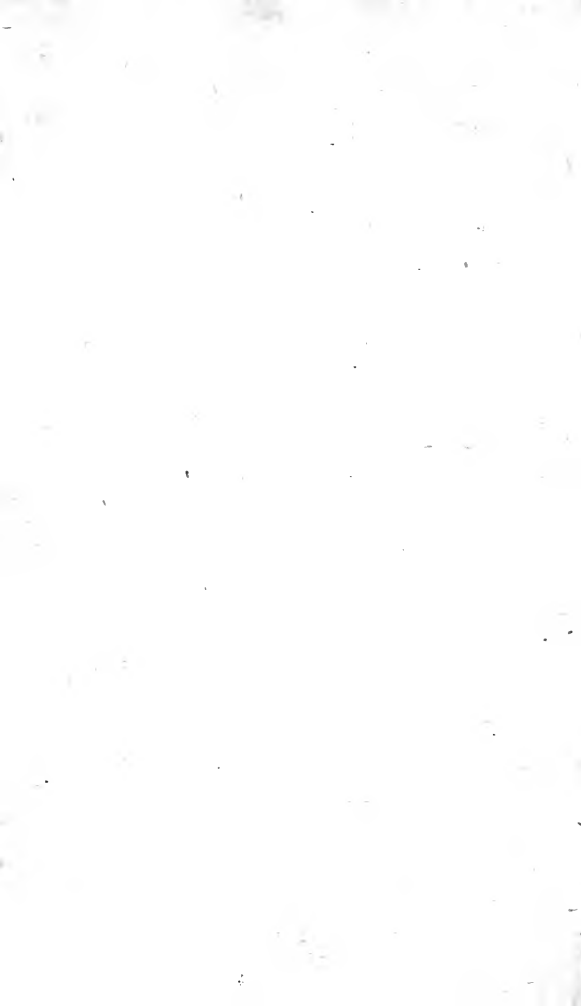
And gain the heart of some rich patroness:

'Tis she, said I, your labours will reward,

If you but join the bricklayer with the bard;

*As thus——should she be old and worse for wear,
You must new-case her, front her, and repair;
If crack'd in fame, as scarce to bear a touch,
You cannot use your trowel then too much;
In short, whate'er her morals, age, or station,
Plaister and white wash in your dedication.
Thus I advis'd—but he detests the plan:
What can be done with such a simple man?
A poet's nothing worth and nought availing,
Unless he'll furnish where there is a failing.
Authors in these good times are made and us'd,
To grant these favours nature has refus'd.
If he won't fib what bounty can he crave?
We pay for what we want, not what we have.——
Nay, tho' of ev'ry blessing we have store,
Our sex will always wish——a little more.——
If he'll not bend his heart to this his duty,
And sell, to who will buy, wit, honour, beauty;
The bricklayer still for him the proper trade is,
Too rough to deal with gentlemen and ladies.——
In short, they'll all avoid him, and neglect him,
Unless that you, his patrons, will protect him.*

THE END.







M^{rs} SIDDONS as MEDEA.

Thorold's sculp

*Once had Parents—ye endearing names!
How my torn heart with recollection bleeds!*

MEDÆA.

A

TRAGEDY,

BY MR. GLOVER.

ADAPTED FOR

THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE-ROYAL, DRURY-LANE.

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOK,

By Permission of the Manager.

"The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas, are omitted in the Representation."

LONDON:

Printed for the Proprietors, under the Direction of

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MDCCXCII.



M E D E A.

THIS is the last produced of four plays by different authors upon the same subject. For those previous to the present, it is enough to stile them bad translations of a bad original—they are all from *SENECA*.

Mr. *GLOVER* however has taken a scope less servile and better suited to his powers, for though he has kept *SENECA* constantly in his eye, yet his poem bears very frequent marks of originality and skill.

It does not in truth appear designed for the stage under our present modes of thinking, retaining so much of the declamatory sentiment and the unmanagable chorus of *SENECA*.—We do not recollect its performance more than for the benefits of an *ACTRESS* of great merit—the late Mrs. *YATES*.

In the closet it will give pleasure to such as are fond of the *ANCIENT DRAMA*; a Greek subject in the dress of a Roman poet, modernized a little by an English writer of considerable merit.

PROLOGUE.

*THOUGH wild our theme, the grave historian's page
Hath sanctify'd the tale through ev'ry age.
Who hath not heard of Argo sent from Greece,
Of Jason's labours for the golden fleece,
And fond Medea's ill-requited aid
To that false hero, who his vows betray'd?
In ev'ry clime, where learned Muses reign,
The stage hath known Medea's mournful strain;
Hath giv'n the flying car, and magic rod
To her, th' avowed descendant of a god.*

*The storms of trouble, which afflict the great,
Teach private life to prize its tranquil state.
That truth the moral of our fable shows
Too well in scenes of unexampled woes,
Which here will ravage an exalted breast
Of merit conscious, and with shame oppress;
Where love and fury, grief and madness join'd,
O'erturn the structure of a godlike mind.
Pow'r, wisdom, science, and her birth divine,
In vain to shield her from distress combine:
Nor wisdom, pow'r, nor science yield relief;
Her potent wand can vanquish all, but grief;*

*In vain her winged chariot sweeps the air, .
To shun that mightier sorceress, despair.*

*The characters and passions hence exprest
Are all submitted to the feeling breast ;
Let ancient story justify the rest.*

Dramatis Personae.

DRURY - LANE.

Men.

JASON,	-	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. Smith.
ÆSON,	-	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. Palmer.
CREON,	-	-	.	-	-	-	Mr. Bensley.
LYCANDER,	-	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. Farren.
First Colchian,	-	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. Packer.
First Corinthian,	-	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. Griffiths.

Women.

MEDEA,	-	-	.	-	-	-	Mrs. Yates.
THEANO,	-	-	-	-	-	-	Mrs. Hopkins.
HECATE,	-	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. Bransby.
First Phæacian.							

Colchians, Phæacians, Thessalians, and Corinthians.

SCENE, *is in the citadel of Corinth, between a grove sacred to Juno, and the royal palace, with a distant prospect of the sea.*



M E D E A.

ACT I. SCENE I.

LYCANDER *seeing* THEANO *advancing from the Temple of JUNO.*

Lycander.

THAT form divine, by all rever'd and lov'd,
Moves from the temple. On her pensive brow
Sits holy care with gentleness and grace,
Whose placid beams humanity reveal.
She stops contemplating the sea. Theano—
Why with that musing aspect tow'rd the main
Stand'st thou regardless of thy brother's voice?

Thea. Imperial Juno in an awful vision,
This morn presented to my wondring sight
The shapes of strangers by distress pursu'd ;
Whom to the refuge of this holy place
I must receive obedient to her charge :
And lo! a vessel turns her hast'ning prow
To Corinth's harbour.

Lyc. Ten well measur'd strokes
Of her swift oars will reach the shore below :
But hear my errand. Creon knows, thy altar
Unclad with garlands still, proclaims thy firmness
Against his daughter's marriage ; then prepare
Thy hallow'd eye to meet his threat'ning brow ;
Fence thy chaste ear against his impious vaunts,
Which urge th' example of Almighty Jove
For his own thirst of empire.

Thea. Say to Creon,
Kings should aspire to imitate the gods,
Not in their pow'r, but goodness ; human virtues
More nigh to Heav'n's perfection may be rais'd,
Than human grandeur : Jove derides the toil
Of mortal pow'r, but smiles on righteous deeds.

Lyc. Thus would I speak, Theano, could my words
And thoughts be tun'd in harmony like thine ;
But danger breaks that union in a palace,
And strains the tongue to discord with the heart :
Then pacify thy goddess, when the king
Exacts my service, if discretion wears
A mask of duty ; kindly thou impute
Blame to my station, and absolve Lycander.

But look ; yon vessel hath discharg'd its train,
Who climb the hill with aged steps and slow.

Nay, turn thy eyes ; a second troop of strangers
March through the city. Sable is their garb,
Their mien dejected. This demands my care.
Farewell.

[Exit.

Enter COLCHIANS.

Thea. What forms are these? All-potent goddess!
I feel thee now; my vision is accomplish'd.

1 Colc. O thou, who seem'st the guardian of these
shades,

Which from the isthmus shew their tow'ring growth,
The sailor's guide through Corinth's double main;
Permit an humble stranger to enquire,
What pow'r is worship'd here.

Thea. The very garb!

The figures painted in my recent vision! *[Aside.*

Thy feet, O stranger, stand on sacred earth.

These shades enclose the venerable fane

Erected there to hymeneal Juno,

Whose presence guards the citadel of Corinth.

1 Colc. Then let us lift our suppliant voice unblam'd,

That in the refuge of this hallow'd grove

Our exil'd feet may rest.

Thea. Your suit is granted.

So wills the pow'r inhabiting that temple.

And say, ye favour'd of connubial Juno,

What are your names and country?

1 Colc. From the banks

Of distant Phasis, and the Euxin wave,

Lost to our native mansions, are we come,

Ill-guided Colchains, to the walls of Corinth.

On king Æetes' daughter we attend,

That boast of Asia, to the sun ally'd,

To Hecaté and Circé, more illustrious
In her own virtues, for her wisdom known
Through every clime, the all-endow'd Medea.

Thea. Where is your princess?

1 Colc. In that anchor'd bark,
Which to your haven from Iolcos sail'd;
Where, on his specious embassy to Creon,
Her husband left her on a lonely pillow.
At length, impatient of his tedious absence,
She and her sons have brav'd th' unsparing deep.

Thea. Yet more unsparing, than the deep, is man.
So will this daughter of affliction find,
When her sad feet are planted on this shore.

1 Colc. How swift are evil tidings! While our keel
But lightly touch'd that well-frequented strand,
We heard, th' ungrateful Jason would divorce her,
This day, to wed the daughter of your monarch.

Thea. If Heav'n prevent not. Through the solemn
shade

Direct thy view. That high rais'd altar note
Close by the fountain. Thither lead your princess.
This is a refuge, which no regal pride
High-swoll'n with pow'r, nor multitude inflam'd
By madding discord, nor invader's rapine
Have e'er profan'd. Return. Yon palace opens.
No friend of yours approaches. It is Creon.
Thou too be present, goddess, and illumine
The earth-born darkness of thy-servant's mind.

[*Exeunt Colchians.*]

Enter CREON.

Creon. Why do they paint Medea's woes to me ?
A king should lift his steady front on high,
And, while he gazes on the radiant throne,
Where bright ambition sits amid the stars,
The hopes, the fears, the miseries of others
Pass by unheeded in his contemplation.

Art thou come forth with those ill-omen'd looks
To blast the public festival ?

Thea. Howl, howl,
Deluded city ; banish from thy dwellings
The genial banquet ; fill thy streets with mourners
To celebrate in notes of lamentation
A nuptial day offensive to the gods.

Creon. Think'st thou, thy priestly office can avail
To counteract the high designs of kings ?
Go, and with bridal chaplets deck thy altar,
Lest thou provoke me to confound thy pride
Elate with wreaths of sanctity in vain.

Thea. Not that the holy fillet binds my temples,
Not, that before the altar I present
The public victim, or a nation's vows
By me are usher'd to th' eternal thrones,
Misjudging monarch, is my heart elate ;
It is, that virtue owns me for her servant.
Benevolence and pity guide my will,
Beneficence and charity my deeds.
Ev'n now, though deem'd importunate and proud,

My soul bows down in heaviness for Creon,
And at his danger sighs in mournful warnings.

Creon. Repeat thy warnings to the coward's ear.
My danger?

Thea. From that goddess, who inspir'd
The Colchian princess to desert her father,
To aid the Grecian heroes, and restore
Our lost possession of the golden fleece.
The voice of loud complaint from yonder beach
Already strikes her ear. Medea——

Creon. Ha!
What of Medea?

Thea. Is arriv'd in Corinth.

Creon. Arriv'd!

Thea. She and her children, to reclaim
A husband and a father in that prince
Whom thou hast destin'd to Creüsa's bed.

Creon. Thou, who obtain'st infinity of pow'r,
Lord of Olympus, king of gods and men,
Dost thou regard thy sceptred sons below?
Say, shall a female hand o'erturn the basis,
Which I am founding to enlarge my sway?
If so, resume the diadem, I wear;
Its scanty circle I reject with scorn.

Thea. Ye winds, disperse impieties like these;
Nor let their sound profane the heav'nly threshold.

Creon. Hence to thy temple.

Thea. Thou defy'st not me,
But her, whose awful presence fills that temple.

Imperfect victims, inauspicious off'rings,
 And sounds portentous have forboded long
 Her high displeasure. Her apparent form
 Stood near my pillow at the op'ning dawn,
 And strictly charg'd me to receive this stranger.
 Think too, what lofty science arms Medea
 With more than nature's force.

Creon. I think it false,
 And all the fabled wonders of her charms,
 Thy legends too of inauspicious off'rings,
 Imperfect victims, and portentous sounds,
 What priests may publish, and a king despise.
 Hence to the temple.

Thea. Farewell, rash prince. My duty is discharg'd.

Creon. Stay. Dost thou mean to give this Colchian
 refuge?

Thea. Can I dispute a deity's injunction?

Creon. Go, dream again; procure some wiser vision,
 Which may instruct thee to avoid my wrath.

[Exit Theano.]

Enter LYCANDER.

Creon. Where hast thou loiter'd to conceal th' ar-
 rival

Of this accurst enchantress, and the purpose
 Of thy rebellious sister to protect her?

Lyc. My lord, these tidings are to me unknown;
 But further news of high import I bear.
 Iolchian Æson, Jason's royal sire,
 Advancing now anticipates this notice.

Enter ÆSON, with Thessalians in mourning.

Creon. Thrice hail! my double brother. Do I
owe

Thy timely presence to our ancient friendship,
Or to th' alarm, Medea's flight might raise,
Who scarce precedes thy fortunate appearance?

My sudden joy o'erlook'd that dusky robe.

Æs. It suits my fortune. Heavy with affliction,
My weary feet are banish'd from Iolcos.
How my fell brother, Pelias, that usurper
Of my paternal sway, was foil'd and slain,
Thou know'st. His son retreated into Thrace;
Whence he hath pour'd a savage host of ruffians,
With unexpected inroad, and so rapid,
That instant flight alone preserv'd thy friend,
Thy suppliant now for aid.

Creon. Dismiss thy cares.

Soon shall thy warlike son display his banners,
Extend my frontier, and recover thine.
More of thy fortunes shalt thou tell hereafter;
But give to gladness this selected day
Of Jason's nuptials.

Æs. Nobly thou reliev'st
A king's distress. Now satisfy thy parent.
Lead me to Jason.

Creon. Follow to my palace.

Lyc. He is not there.

Creon. What say'st thou?

Lyc. On the sands

Alone with melancholy pace he treads,
As I but now descry'd him from this rock.

Æs. With melancholy pace?

Creon. His promise binds him
This very morning to espouse Creüsa.

Æs. Perhaps with fresh calamity o'erworn,
I doubt too much; yet hear me.

Creon. Thy appearance
Removes all doubts. Lycander, find the prince.
Say, who is come to celebrate his nuptials.

Æs. [*To Lycander.*] Is he a stranger to Medea's
landing?

Lyc. I trust he is.

Æs. They must not meet.

Creon. Lycander,
See, thou prevent it. Send Theano to us;
And let her bring obedience: else her fault
Shall on thy head be punish'd. [*Exit Lyc.*]

Æs. Should my son
Once see Medea!

Creon. Can her looks annul
A league like ours?

Æs. Alas! thou little know'st her.
Her eyes surpasses that refulgent star,
Which first adorns the evening; and her talents
Exceed her beauty. "Like the forked thunder
"She wields resistless arguments; her words
"With more than lightning's subtlety are wing'd."

Creon. Why art thou startled?

Æs. She is there—ascending;

My sight, acquainted with her haughty steps,
Shrinks, ere they touch the summit of this hill.

Creon. Which is the far-fam'd sorceress of Colchis?

Æs. Too well distinguish'd by her stately port,
And elevation o'er that weeping train,
She tow'rs a genuine offspring of the gods.
Rage on her brow, and anguish in her eye,
Denounce the growing tempest of her mind.

Creon. Now, god of waters, since thy partial hand
Thrusts this barbarian outcast on my shores,
Back to thy floods the fugitive I spurn.

Æs. What means my royal friend? Retire. Avoid
This formidable woman, who may wound
Our dignity. I know her soaring mind,
Which, all enlighten'd with sublimest knowledge,
Disdains the state and majesty of kings,
Nor ranks with less than deity itself.

Creon. Curse on her beauty, and majestic mien!
But let the rumour of her pow'r be true;
The Sun, her boasted ancestor, may arm
Her hand with fire; let Hecaté and Circé,
The goddesses of spells, and black enchantments,
Attend her steps, and clothe her feet in terror:
We have our fiends; the sorceress shall find,
That grief, despair, distraction wait our nod,
To wring her heart through all her magic guards.

[*Exeunt.*]

*Enter MEDEA, her two Children, Colchians and
Phæacians.*

Med. No more, I charge you. Noble minds, oppress'd

By injuries, disdain the sound of comfort.

Ye fiends and furies, wont to leave your flames
At my command, and tremble at my charms,
Now, now ascend, and aid Medea's rage.
Give me the voice of thunder to resound
My indignation o'er the earth and heav'ns;
That I, who draw my lineage from the Sun,
Am fall'n below the basest lot of slaves:
That anguish, want, despair, contempt and shame,
Are heap'd together by the hands of fate,
Whelm'd in one mass of ruin on my head,
And dash my struggling virtue to the ground.

Colc. Why to our faithful counsels art thou deaf?

Med. Canst thou by counsel waft my exil'd feet
To my lost parents; my forsaken friends,
And native palace?—Oh! I gave him all;
To him my virgin bosom I resign'd,
For him the regal mansion of my father,
The lov'd companions of my youth deserted;
From foul defeat, from shame, from death I sav'd
him:

What more could woman?—Yet he weds another.
Me he abandons, and these helpless infants,
Forlorn, unshelter'd in a foreign clime,
To ev'ry outrage, ev'ry want expos'd.

“Blast his perfidious head; vindictive lightnings!
“Unhappy woman! Canst thou, in the height
“Of thy despair, thy rage and indignation,
“Canst thou pursue him with a heavier curse,
“Than to be plung'd in woes, which equal thine?”

1 *Colc.* Though stung with just resentment, due regard

Pay to my age, fidelity and service.

A long and painful traverse from Icolcos

Hast thou endur'd, nor since thy landing here,

The needful succour known of rest, or food.

Med. Talk not to me of nourishment and rest.

Food to these lips, and slumber to these eyes,

Must ever now be strangers.

1 *Colc.* By the beams

Of thy forefather, never will I see

Thy wisdom bound in vassalage to passion.

Once more I warn thee, princess, to thy refuge.

This is the consecrated bow'r of Juno.

Thou underneath the hospitable shade

Sit suppliant down.

Med. Improvident Medea!

To raise another from destruction's depths,

To wealth, to glory raise him, yet thyself

Leave destitute and suppliant! Oh! what art thou,

Whom blinded men unerring wisdom call?

Thou couldst not pierce the thin, the airy veil,

Which from my eyes conceal'd the paths of danger;

Nor canst thou now repel th' increasing storm

Of rapid anguish, which o'erturns my peace:

Down to the endless gloom of dreary night;

Hence, let me drive thee from my inmost soul,

That nothing calm may hover nigh my heart

To cool its pain, and save me from distraction. [*Exit.*

" *A Colc.* Come on, ye soft companions in affliction,

" Melodious daughters of Phæacia's isle ;
 " In strains alternated let us chaunt our grief :
 " Perhaps our mistress we may charm to rest.
 " *A Phæa.* O music, sweet artificer of pleasure,
 " Why is thy science exercis'd alone
 " In festivals, on hymeneal days,
 " And in the full assemblies of the happy ?
 " Ah ! how much rather should we court thy skill
 " In sorrow's gloomy season, to diffuse
 " Thy smooth allurements through the languid ear
 " Of self-devour'd affliction, and delude
 " The wretched from their sadness.

" *A Colc.* Let us melt
 " In tuneful accents flowing to our woes ;
 " That so Medea may at least reflect,
 " She is not singly wretched. Let her hear
 " Our elegies, whose measur'd moan records
 " Our friends forsaken, and our country lost ;
 " That she no longer to her sole distress
 " Her deep-revolving spirit may confine,
 " But by our sorrows may relieve her own.

" *First part of the music.* [Iambics.

" *A Colc.* Ye stately battlements and tow'rs,
 " Imperial Corinth's proud defence ;
 " Thou citadel, whose dewy top
 " The clouds in fleecy mantles fold,
 " Projecting o'er the briny foam
 " An awful shadow, where the might
 " Of Neptune urges either shore,
 " And this contracted isthmus forms :

“ Ah! why your glories to admire
“ Do we repining Colchians stand,
“ Ill-fated strangers! on the banks
“ Of silver-water'd Phasis born.

“ [*Trochaics.*

“ *A Phæa.* Pride of art, majestic columns,
“ Which beneath the sacred weight
“ Of that god's refulgent mansion
“ Lift your flow'r-insculptur'd heads;
“ Oh! ye marble channell'd fountains,
“ Which the swarming city cool,
“ And, as art directs your murmurs,
“ Warble your obedient rills:
“ You our eyes obscur'd by sorrow
“ View unconscious of your grace,
“ Mourning still our lost Phæacia,
“ Long-remember'd native isle.

“ [*Iambics.*

“ *A Phæa.* O that on fam'd Peneus' banks
“ The nymphs of Pelion had bemoan'd
“ Their shady haunts to ashes turn'd
“ By Heav'n's red anger! hateful pines,
“ Which form'd thy well-compacted sides,
“ O Argo, fatal to our peace.
“ Thou never then through Adria's wave
“ Hadst reach'd Phæacia's blissful shore,
“ Nor good Alcinöus the hand
“ Of Jason with Medea join'd,
“ Nor sent us weeping from our homes,
“ Her luckless train, to share her grief.

“ *Second Part.* [Trochaics.]

- “ *A Phæa.* Known recesses, where the echoes
 “ Through the hollow-winding vale,
 “ And the hill’s retentive caverns
 “ Tun’d their voices from our songs;
 “ Shade-encircled, verdant levels,
 “ Where the downy turf might charm
 “ Weary feet to joyous dances
 “ Mix’d with madrigals and pipes:
 “ O ye unforgotten pleasures,
 “ Pleasures of our tender youth,
 “ You we never shall revisit,
 “ Ill-exchang’d for scenes of wo,
 “ *A Colc.* From the polish’d realms of Greece,
 “ Where the arts and muses reign,
 “ Truth and justice are expell’d.
 “ Here from palaces and tow’rs
 “ Snowy-vested faith is fled;
 “ While beneath the shining roofs
 “ Falshood stalks in golden robes.
 “ Dreary Caucasus! again
 “ Take us to thy frozen breast;
 “ Let us shiver on thy ridge,
 “ Ever-during pile of ice
 “ Gather’d from the birth of time!
 “ *A Phæa.* Cheering breeze with sportive pinion
 “ Gliding o’er the crisped main,
 “ With our tresses thou shalt wanton
 “ On our native sands no more.
 “ Fountains, whose melodious waters,

"Cooling our Phæacian grots,
 "Oft our eyes to sweetest slumber
 "With their lulling falls beguil'd;
 "We have chang'd your soothing warble
 "For the doleful moan of wo,
 "And our peaceful moss deserting
 "Found a pillow thorn'd with case. [Exeunt."

ACT II. SCENE I.

JASON *advancing from the End of the Stage*, THEANO
on one Side, MEDEA *in the Grove*.

Theano.

THE princely steps of Jason are in sight.
 He scarce conjectures, that th' indignant breast
 Of her he injures, pours from yonder shades
 Its high-ton'd anguish. Yet, illustrious false one,
 What stinging thoughts distort thy manly frame!
 How have thy gestures lost their wonted grace
 In this keen struggle with upbraiding conscience!
 Thou soon, before that inward judge arraign'd,
 Shalt hear me plead thy wrong'd Medea's cause.

"This is the crisis——Too complacent hero,
 "By pride untutor'd, though misled by error,
 "Thou wilt be calm and gentle to rebuke."

Jas. Press'd by a father's absolute decree,
 Solicited by Corinth's potent lord,
 Aw'd with the specious sound of public good,

I have consented, and the hour is nigh.
 Oh ! in some future hour of sad reflection
 May not my heart with self-reproach confess,
 This plea of public welfare was ambition ;
 And filial duty was a feeble tie
 To authorise the breach of sacred vows.

Med. [*In the grove.*] Ungrateful Jason !

Jas. Whence proceeds this voice ?

Med. [*In the grove.*] Oh, sire of light, thou seest my
 wrongs.

Jas. Again !

Imagination, pregnant with remorse,
 In sounds unreal yields its birth of terror.

Med. [*In the grove.*] Ye arbiters of oaths, and plight-
 ed faith,

O Jove and Themis, hear !

Jas. It is a voice !

Resembling hers, when she, alas ! is far ;
 No mockery of fancy. [*Leans against the scene.*]

Thea. [*Advancing.*] On his cheek

Health seems to wither. O'er his shaded sight
 The shiv'ring eye-lids close. A creeping tremor
 O'erspreads his fading lips, and dewy limbs.
 Bless'd be these signals of returning virtue.

Hail ! prince. Why stand'st thou list'ning ? What
 alarms thee ?

Jas. An awful murmur from offended heav'n,
 Through yonder branches, issu'd in a voice,
 Which chill'd my spirit, and unnerv'd my strength.

Thea. What didst thou hear ?

Jas. Medea's well-known accents
Thrice did the vocal prodigy repeat,
Though seas divide her from these faithless arms.

Thea. There is no need of prodigy. Mere nature
In thy own breast will startle, when thou know'st,
It was Medea's self, who call'd on Jason.

Jas. Herself?

Thea. The injur'd daughter of Æetes,
But newly-wafted from Thessalia's shore,
Thou may'st discover through those parting boughs;
Where she is seated near the fountain's brink
With her pale cheek reclining on the altar.

Jas. [*Looking on the grove.*] Stern deities of vengeance,
and of justice!
Now pass your sentence, Nemesis and Themis!
My ill-wrought web of hated life unravel,
Which was not wove for happiness.

Thea. Be patient.

Jas. Peculiar woes through ev'ry stage of being
Were Jason's portion. Early I beheld
My father's crown usurp'd. My youth subjected
To an insidious tyrant was devoted
A sacrifice in Colchis—So he hop'd,
And I wish now!—I triumph'd—Glory follow'd,
The source of new calamity to me.
Where is that glory? Serving selfish kings,
Abetting falshood, perjury and fraud.

Thea. Turn thy attention from thy own distress,
To feel, what others suffer by thy frailty,
Thy wife and offspring. Listen.

Jas. I obey.

Thea. How couldst thou lead this all-excelling princess

From clime to clime, th' associate in thy toils,
To fall the victim in a foreign land
Of those unrighteous statutes, which appoint
Imperious husbands masters of divorce;
How think, th' establish'd practice of the Greeks,
Or all, which varnish'd policy might plead,
Could e'er absolve thee from a solemn tie,
With such uncommon obligations bound,
By those superior, those unwritten laws,
Which honour whispers to the conscious heart?

Jas. O venerable woman, lend thy aid.

Thea. Atone thy fault. Repentance is heroic,
And holds its rank among the manly virtues.

Jas. Yes, I renounce Creüsa, and her kingdom.
Yet see this breast with new-born terror beat.
Not all my trials through unnumber'd dangers,
From monsters, famine, from the raging deep,
And dark-brow'd care, have so confirm'd my courage,
But that I tremble at th' impending conflict.
"I dread that scorn and fury, whose excess
"May kill repentance, and provoke destruction."

Enter LYCANDER.

Lyc. The king, Theano, summons thee before him.

Thea. What time?

Lyc. This instant.

Thea. I obey his pleasure.

Jas. Thou wilt not leave me ?

Thea. Thou hast heard this summons.

Heed my last words. Maintain thy just resolves.

Lycander, let thy conduct leave no room

For my reproaches, and the wrath of Juno.

Lyc. Fear not ; thy counsels shall be treasur'd here.

[*Exit Theano.*

“ I see a sudden change. My single charge

“ I will deliver, and forbear enquiry.”

Long have I sought thee, prince. The royal Æson
Is now in Corinth, and will soon accost thee.

Jas. My father here ! Why, multiply distress,
Accumulate perplexity and shame

On my devoted head, ye righteous pow'rs !

Lyc. Prince, he is near ; and I return to Creon.

[*Exit.*

Enter ÆSON.

Jas. Amaz'd, distract'd, tortur'd, I retain
My veneration here. O sacred head,

What from thy peaceful habitation calls

Thy silver hairs to these abodes of wo ?

Or com'st thou wrapt in sable to lament

Our mutual errors, and dishonour'd names ?

Æs. Why I am here, why bearing this apparel,

Too soon will Jason know. But first reply ;

Why on the sea's waste margin was my son

Observ'd to trace his solitary path ;

When Corinth pauses in her gen'ral gladness,

Her choral songs and minstrelsy suspending

For Jason's absence ?

Jas. Better she should wait,
Whole ages wait, than justice be suspended,
And the return of honour be unwelcom'd.

Æs. Can I interpret these mysterious words?

Jas. Hast thou not heard, my father, that Medea
Weeps in that bow'r, invoking Jove and Themis
To witness what returns she meets from Jason?

Æs. What most I dreaded. Then my aged limbs
Must wear these garments still unchang'd, thy country,
Thy friends, thy father's house unceasing mourn.
The woes of exile more severe, than time,
Indent the furrows deeper on these brows.

Jas. The woes of exile?

Æs. Yes, the race of Pelias
Force me to Corinth. Young Acastus reigns.
The gen'rous Creon promises his aid;
That aid will Jason cruelly prohibit.

Jas. Then we begin to reap the bitter harvest
From seeds, which selfish policy had sown.
When I was hurry'd to these fatal walls,
And, gall'd with jealous fear, Medea left thee;
Heav'n, in that period, from the roll of fortune
Eras'd our titles, and the with'ring sceptre
Shrunk from thy grasp.

Æs. Nay, look not thus entranc'd.
What draws thy eye?

Jas. She rises from the grove,
A sun disfigur'd by a mist of sorrow
Rais'd from our crime. Awake thee—What remains,

But that we fall before our known protectress,
 Confessing both in Jove's offended sight,
 How much of weak inconstancy hath stain'd
 My name of hero, what ignoble guile
 Disgrac'd thy regal head?

Æs. And who must save Iolcos?

Jas. She. Medea's gen'rous wisdom,
 Which in itself contains the strength of armies,
 And quell'd old Pelias, can dethrone the son.

Æs. What frenzy guides thee? Follow me to Creon.

Jas. Rest thou with me.

Æs. Inhuman! dost thou covet
 To see my age and dignity revil'd?
 I charge thee, follow.

Jas. Riveted, I wait,
 As if congenial with this rock I grew
 From its foundations, till Medea come.

Æs. Revolter! she is coming—But my eye
 Shall not be far. Remember, thou dost hazard
 Thy country's love, perhaps thy father's too. [*Exit.*

Enter MEDEA, Colchians and Phæacians.

Jas. How shall I face her injur'd worth, how choose
 The most auspicious moment to accost her?

Med. Why have I science to command the moon,
 To draw the spirits from the realms of night,
 And trace the hidden pow'rs of baneful nature?
 Why am I wise, unless to feel my sorrows
 With sharper sensibility, and prove,
 How weak is wisdom struggling with despair?

Colc. Its succour yet solicit. Wisdom smooths
Each thorny path, and Virtue is her sister.

Med. Old man, be silent. Hath Medea's grief
The leisure now to hear thy moral tale ?
No, let me loath my being, "curse the sun,
"My bright forefather," and upbraid the heav'ns,
That I was ever born. I will exclaim ;
I will demand, ye unrelenting pow'rs,
Why your injustice terrifies the earth
With such an image of distress as mine.

Jas. This interview I see in all its terrors ;
But further pause will turn suspense to madness.

Medea—I am come——

Med. And dar'st thou come,
With that unmatch'd ingratitude and falsehood,
To face the constant worth, thou now betray'st ?

Jas. I come to lay my errors in thy view.

Med. No, to my view display Creüsa's beauty ;
Dwell on her merit, who excels Medea.

Jas. The deity, presiding o'er that temple,
I call to witness, that my father's pleasure——

Med. And dost thou urge thy father, thou perfidious ?
Thy father ! oh ! that I had been thus wise,
And ne'er forgot the duty of a child.

Thy father gave thee a precarious being,
In its first flight of glory doom'd to fall,
Fresh in its prime, a victim to oblivion,
Had not I sav'd and borne thee to renown.

Jas. Jason's life and glory are thy gifts.

Med. I gave thee too my love, my virgin love,

My friends, my country, my unspotted fame,
My joy, my peace, all, all on thee bestow'd ;—
What could a father more ? Him too my pow'r
Snatch'd from oppression, and his treach'rous brother,
Usurping Pelias slew, that cruel Pelias,
Who on thy youth impos'd the dang'rous toil,
Whence I preserv'd thee—But, my wrath, be still.
Inconstant, base alike, both son and sire
Deserve my scorn.

Jas. Shall contumelious harshness
Blot those perfections from the son deriv'd,
And not one moment to thy wisdom yield,
That thou may'st hear me ?

Med. No, thou most ingrate
Of all, who e'er forgot their benefactors.
When the fam'd Argo, fraught with Grecian princes,
Pierc'd with its beak the sandy verge of Phasis,
What daring hand but mine their trophies rais'd ?
The golden fleece amid th' enchanted grove
Had hung untouch'd beside its scaly guardian ;
Wild dogs and vultures had devour'd your lambs ;
Your bones had whiten'd on the Colchian strand.
I fearless stept between the narrow bounds,
Which parted your devoted lives from fate,
With mystic spells entranc'd the sleepless dragon,
Bent to the yoke the brazen-footed bulls,
And gave you safety, victory, and fame.

Jas. I own thy merits ; and the deep remembrance—

Med. For ever be detested that remembrance.

Curs'd be the skill, which fram'd your fatal bark,
 Accurs'd the gale, which fill'd her spreading canvas ;
 But doubly curs'd the hour, the hour of ruin,
 When first, I view'd that smiling treach'rous form,
 And fondly trusted to the fair delusion.

“ O that amid the terrors of enchantment,
 “ When, for thy sake, profoundest hell was open'd,
 “ Some fiend had whirl'd me to the desert pole ;
 “ Or that the earth, dividing with my charms,
 “ Low, as her central cavern, had entomb'd me !”

Jas. I feel thy anguish, daughter of *Æetes*,
 Which would o'erwhelm me, had I less to offer,
 Than my repentant heart.

Med. Thy perjur'd heart,
 Foul with ingratitude and guilt. *Avaunt*,
 And give it thy *Creüsa* ; I despise thee.

Jas. Think, who I am. Though criminal I stand
 And mourn my fault, forget not, I am *Jason*,
 By fame in brightest characters recorded.
 Deserving thy reproaches, I endur'd them ;
 But sure the lustre of my name is proof
 Against contempt.

Med. The recompence of falsehood.

Jas. Hold, I conjure thee ?—Nay, I will be heard.
 When first I sail'd for *Corinth*, all my purpose
 Was to establish, by a league with *Creon*,
 Th' unstable throne of *Thessaly*, since crush'd
 By fierce *Acastus*. *Æson's* strict injunction
 To wed *Creüsa* follow'd my arrival ;

When thou wert distant from my sight, and Creon
Would grant his friendship——

Med. But by thy disgrace.

Jas. Impatient woman!

Med. Could a king's protection
Be rank'd with mine, thou weakly-perjur'd man?

Jas. Thou shalt not stop me, by th' immortal
gods!

I will proceed—"Intemp'rate passion stifles
"Her breathless voice—Oh, majesty! Oh, wisdom!
"Oh, features once divine! how long shall rage
"Depoil your grace?" No other form of beauty,
No qualities or talents to thy own
Have I preferr'd. By empire's glaring bubble,
By policy's ensnaring voice misled,
Or by mistaken duty to a parent,
I swerv'd from sacred faith. At thy approach
Light flashes through my error; to thy feet
Contrition brings me, no ignoble suppliant:
The scourge of tyrants, vanquisher of monsters,
Thy instrument of glory, now most glorious,
That he subdues himself, implores thy pardon.

Oh, unadvis'd!—Obdurate!—While I sue,
Thy unforgiving brow returns disdain.
Think of thy children!

Med. Traitor, dar'st thou name them?

Jas. Beware; destruction, with a hunter's speed,
Pursues us both. Inextricable snares
Are spreading round us—Hail be calm—Provoke

Ill fate no further—Weigh in wisdom's balance
The pow'rful obligations, which assail'd me.

Med. Can they be weigh'd with conquest, life, and
fame,

The vast profusion of my bounty on thee,
Thou weak, thou blind, insensible, and base ?
No, my superior soul shall stoop no more.
Though once from foul defeat and death I sav'd thee,
I will not raise thee from thy grov'ling falsehood.
Let fortune's whole malignity pursue me,
I and my children wretched, as we may be,
Outcast, derided by the barb'rous herd,
Spurn'd by th' unpitying proud, with grim despair,
With beggary and famine, our companions,
Will wander through th' inhospitable world,
Nor ev'n amidst our complicated woes
E'er think of thee, perfidious, but with scorn.

[*Exeunt Medea, Colchians and Phæacians.*]

Enter Æson.

Jas. Then let the tempest roar, tyrannic woman,
The billows rise in mountains o'er thy head.

Æs. Well, thou hast seen her ; while thy father's
eye

Ach'd at the low submission of a hero,
Who with unmollify'd disdain was spurn'd.
Say, will my gentle son persist to court
The fellowship of fury, and abide
The acrimonious taunt, the settled frown,
The still-renew'd upbraiding ? Will my Jason

For this to deathless obloquy abandon
 His name of hero, while his arm rejects
 A proffer'd aid to reinstate his father,
 Redeem his country, and refresh his laurels,
 With want of action fading ?

Jas. There, O Mars,
 Thou dost provide a banquet for despair.

Æs. No, for thy valour, son, a feast of glory.
 Come, leave this melancholy spot. Return
 With me to joy.

Jas. I go—but never more
 Speak to thy son of joy. My soul forgoes
 All gentle thoughts. Its sad relief is horror
 From the grim pow'r of homicide and ravage.

O that this ev'ning, lighted by the stars,
 And glimpse of armour, I might turn my back
 On Corinth's bulwarks; that the trumpet's clangor,
 The shrill-mouth'd clarion, and the deep-ton'd horn,
 The groans of slaughter, and the crash of spears,
 Might blend their discord for my nuptial song.

[*Exeunt.*

“ *Enter Colchians and Phæacians from the Grove, looking on JASON, as he quits the Stage.*

“ [*Solemn Recitative.*

“ *A Colc.* Thou who didst yoke the brazen-footed
 bulls,

“ And fearless guide the adamantine plough,

“ Which Vulcan labour'd, o'er the direful soil

“ Sown with the serpent's teeth, whence crested helms

“ And spears high-brandish’d by the earth-born race
 “ For thy encounter pierc’d the crumbling mould ;
 “ Thou conqueror, beware : more dang’rous foes
 “ Doom’d to subdue thee in that palace wait.

“ [*Trochaics.*

“ *A Phæa.* Soft, alluring wiles are there
 “ To seduce thee from the paths
 “ Trod by godlike steps alone,
 “ Paths of virtue, paths of praise.
 “ Colchian monsters, syren’s songs,
 “ Might thy mortal frame destroy :
 “ These will kill thy glorious name ;
 “ Matchless Jason, then beware.

“ [*Solemn Recitative.*

“ *A Colc.* Thou yet untainted hero, Ah! reflect,
 “ That keenest sorrow, poverty, or pain,
 “ Are light and gentle to the bitter darts,
 “ Thrice steep’d in gall, which Nemesis directs
 “ Against his bosom, who, by merit pass’d,
 “ Once drew th’ enchanting melody of praise,
 “ Then, forfeiting the sweet report of fame,
 “ O’er his irrevocable loss repines.

“ [*Trochaics.*

“ *A Phæa.* Shall the nymphs of Tempé’s vale,
 “ Who in rural lays record
 “ Thy persuasive love, that won
 “ Kind Medea to thy aid,
 “ Shall they change th’ applauding strain ?
 “ Shall the discord of reproach

“ Wound thy ear, accustom’d long

“ To the music of renown ?

[*Exeunt.*”]

ACT III. SCENE I.

Enter THEANO and the 1 Colchian.

1 Colchian.

HOPE in its bud was blasted by her anger.

Thea. Unhappy anger ! but her wrongs are great ;
Nor is my pity less. Instruct me, Colchian,
Was she not fam’d for hospitable deeds ?

1 Colc. Oft hath her known benignity preserv’d
The Grecian strangers on our barb’rous coast.

Thea. Yet now a Grecian prince denies her shelter.

Well, introduce me to her.

1 Colc. Restless anguish
Will soon transport her hither. Look, she comes.
Here let us watch some interval of calmness.

Thea. Are those her children ?

1 Colc. Yes, from Jason sprung.

Thea. They too with intermingling tears enhance
The piteous scene. Thou fair and stately tree,
Who once so proudly didst o’ertop the forest,
What cruel hand despoils thee of thy honours ?
Now dost thou show, as blasted by the lightning,
With all thy tender branches with’ring round.

Enter MEDEA, her two Children, Colchians and Phæacians.

Eldest Child. Why fly'st thou from us? Wherefore dost thou frown

Whene'er we name, or ask to see our father?

Med. You have no father!

Eldest Child. When we left Iolcos,
Didst thou not tell us, he was here in Corinth?
Now we have pass'd the frightful sea, what hinders
But we may find him?

Med. Never find him more
To you a parent, or to me a husband.

Eldest Child. Alas! thou weep'st.

Med. You too must learn to weep,
Ye destin'd wand'ers in the vale of mourning.
Why do you lift your infant eyes to me?
Your helpless mother cannot guard your childhood,
Nor bid neglect and sorrow stand aloof.

I once had parents—Ye endearing names!
How my torn heart with recollection bleeds!
You too perhaps o'erflow your aged cheeks,
Rend from your heads the venerable snow
Oft, as your lost Medea is recall'd,
And for a hapless offspring mourn like me.

Colc. Heart-breaking sorrow now succeeds to
rage.

Turn, royal mistress; see the holy priestess.

Med. Hail! most humane.

Thea. To Juno render praise.

Med. She owes me refuge. Prompted first by Juno,
I left my native Phasis, and convey'd
Back to her favour'd clime the golden fleece.
Thy part was all humanity.

Thea. Sage princess,
Hear me divulge the menaces of Creon
To drive thee hence. Expect his presence soon.
Fear not his anger. Warranted by Juno,
By my high function, by my nature more,
I gave thee, I continue my protection.

Med. Turn to these infants thy benignant looks.
Them to secure from trouble, and the terrors
Which gather closely on the steps of time,
Is all their mother's care; at whose entreaty
Do thou receive their innocence in charge:
But leave Medea to her own protection.

Eldest Child. Our father long hath left us. By thy
side,
And in thy bosom, we had comfort still.
Wilt thou forsake us?

Med. We will meet again.
Remove them from me. I can bear no longer
To view those mirrors, which reflect the image
Of my distress, and multiply my pains.

Thea. Weep not, my children.

Med. Hide their melting softness;
Lest they dissolve the vigour which must save them.

[Medea continues weeping.]

Thea. Come, lovely mourners, rest a while with me.
Come, and be practis'd to repeat your vows

For this most wrong'd of mothers. You shall lift
Your blameless hands, sweet supplicants, shall kneel
To nuptial Juno, and to rev'rend Themis,
The arbitress of oaths, and plighted faith.
The dove-like voice of your untainted age,
Thus visited by undeserv'd affliction,
May win their guardian mercy; "when the pray'rs
"Of man, false man, grown reprobate by time,
"With all the pomp of hecatombs, would fail."

[Exit to the Temple with the Children.]

Med. Are they withdrawn?

Colc. They are.

Med. Then, mighty spirit,

Once more at least thy majesty shall blaze
Such as thou wert amid th' enchanted wood;
When thou didst summon hell's reluctant pow'rs,
And hell obey'd: when dark'ning from her car
The moon descended, and the knotted oak
Bent with thy charms, which tam'd the wakeful dra-
gon,

And safety gave to demi-gods and heroes.

Colc. Behold the King.

Enter CREON, LYCANDER, and Attendants.

Med. Why comes the king of Corinth
To break upon my sorrows, "and to vaunt,
"That his injustice is endu'd with pow'r
"To grieve Medea?"

Creon. To debate, weak woman,

D ij

Is thy known province ; to command is mine.
Be seen no longer in the bounds of Corinth.

Med. And who art thou dost give Medea law,
And circumscribe the slend'rest spot on earth
Against her passage ? Unconfin'd as winds
I range with nature to her utmost bounds ;
While, as I tread, mankind reveres my steps,
Its hidden pow'rs each element unfolds,
And mightiest heroes, anxious for renown,
Implore Medea's favour. What is Creon,
Who from the sun's descendant dares withhold
The right to hospitality and justice ?

Creon. Not of the number who revere thy steps,
Or supplicate thy favour ; one, whose sceptre
Forbids thy residence in Greece. Away ;
Range through the snows of Caucasus ; return
To Pontic deserts, to thy native wilds :
Among barbarians magnify thy deeds.
This land admits no wand'rer like Medea,
Who with a stranger from her father fled,
Fled from her country, and betray'd them both.

Med. With him I fled, whom thou wouldst foully
draw
Through blackest treason to thy daughter's bed ;
And for the rest, if equity or wisdom
Were Creon's portion, I would plead before him :
But vindicate my actions to a robber,
Who basely watch'd my absence to purloin
My only wealth ! My lofty soul disdains it.

Creon. Hence, while thou may'st, rash woman, ere
thou prove

How strong the awful image of the gods
Is stamp'd on monarchs, and thou feel my wrath
Swift in destruction like the bolt of Jove.

Med. Dost thou recount thy fables to Medea,
The idiot tale, which cheats the gaping vulgar,
To her who knows the secret source of things?
Behold this comely image of the gods!

This violater of the holiest ties,
Whom the dull hand of undiscerning chance
Hath deck'd in purple robes, and pageant gold,
Resembles much the majesty of heav'n!

Creon. Thy bare expulsion shall not now atone.
I will stand forth th' avenger of Æetes
On his false daughter; for thy crimes in Colchis
Vindictive furies in this distant region,
Shame, chastisement, and insult, shall o'ertake thee,
Spoil that fair body, humble that fell heart;
Till, as with bitt'rest agony it breaks,
Thou curse its wild temerity, which brav'd
The pond'rous hand of majesty incens'd.

Med. Ha! thou vain boaster, hast thou yet to learn
That I can rock the iron throne of Pluto;
Can waft thee struggling to Rhiphæan crags,
Where thou shalt rave, and foam, and gnash thy teeth,
Where frost shall parch thee, where the clouds shall
scatter

Their storms around thee, whirl in sportive air

Thy gorgeous robe, thy diadem and sceptre ?
While I—Oh! fruitless, unsubstantial pow'r!
Must still continue wretched—Oh! vain threat!
Hath he not torn my Jason from these arms ?
What then avails the knowledge of my mind ?
Stretch'd on the rack of anguish is my heart.
What spark of wisdom in my breast remains ?
All is extinguish'd there—Oh, Jason! Jason!

[*Is supported by her Women.*]

Creon. [*To Lycander.*] Thou seest the haughty sorceress abash'd

Before a monarch's persevering frown.

Lyc. [*Aside.*] Most injur'd woman!

Creon. Go, transport her hence,
Ere she revive.

Lyc. The multitude already
Begin to murmur; were this holy place
Defil'd by force, their zeal would swell to madness.
Perhaps this princess, for her wisdom fam'd,
May be persuaded to abandon Corinth.
And she revives with milder looks.

Med. [*Aside.*] Pride, pride,
For once be wise; in lowliness disguise thee,
That thou may'st rise to vengeance. King of Corinth,
I only crave three hours to quit thy borders.

Creon. [*To Lycander.*] If she exceed that slender
space of time,
Force shall remove her from my loathing sight.

[*Exit.*]

Lyc. This contest, princess, thou hast wisely clos'd.

Three hours elaps'd, expect me to return
 Thy safe conductor to the kingdom's frontier. [*Exit.*
 1 *Colc.* Thou dost not droop. This tyrant's empty
 threats

Thy very breath could dissipate like clouds,
 Which for a while some hideous form assume,
 Then pass away dissolv'd to fleeting vapour.
 I too will aid thee. By thy father's sister
 I was held dear, by Circé, pow'rful queen,
 Who taught me various spells and incantations.

Med. Go then, and bring my wand, that potent rod,
 Which grew a branch of ebony, o'ershading
 The throne of Pluto; sever'd thence, and dipt
 Thrice in the cold of Lethe's sleepy waters,
 By Hecaté on Circé was bestow'd,
 By her on me, to still the winds and floods,
 Night's drowsy curtains o'er the sky to draw,
 And all its active fires entrance to rest.
 Leave us apart. Retire, my faithful virgins,
 Who share so kindly in Medea's woes.

I would not pierce your gentle hearts with terror.

[*Exeunt omnes, præter Med. and 1 Colc.*

Med. [*Waving her wand.*] First, rise ye shades im-
 pervious to the sight;

And you, ye sable-skirted clouds, descend:
 Us and our mystic deeds with night surround.

[*The Stage is darkened.*

Thou, by whose pow'r the magic song [*lambics.*
 Charms from its orb th' unwilling moon,
 Controls the rapid planet's speed,

And dims the constellation's fires ;

“ While sounding torrents stop and sleep,
 “ While fountain-nymphs in dread withhold
 “ Their mazy tribute from the meads,
 “ And stiff'ning serpents hear and die :”

Terrific deity, whose name,
 And altar stain'd with human blood
 On Tauric cliffs the Scythian wild,
 And fell Sarmatian tribes adore ;
 “ Wreath'd in snakes, and twining boughs [*Trochaics.*
 “ Gather'd from infernal oaks,
 “ Which o'er Pluto's portal hung
 “ Shed a second night on hell ;”

In thy raven-tinctur'd stole,
 Grasping thy tremendous brand,
 With thy howling train around,
 Awful Hecaté, ascend.

1 *Colc.* By the pitchy streams of Styx,
 Lethe's mute and lazy flood,
 By the dreadful vapour sent
 From Avernus' steaming pool ;

By th' eternal sigh, which heaves
 With Cocytus' mournful wave,
 By the Phlegethontic blaze,
 Direful goddess, hear and rise.

“ Or if, where discord late hath heap'd [*Iambics.*
 “ Her bloody hecatombs to Mars,
 “ Thou sweeping o'er the mangled slain
 “ Dost tinge thy feet in sanguine dew ;
 “ Ah ! leave awhile the vulture's shriek,

“ The raven croaking o’er the dead,
 “ The midnight wolf’s insatiate howl,
 “ And hither turn thy solemn pace.

“ The winds in magic horror bound
 “ Shall at thy presence cease to breathe,
 “ No thunder-teeming cloud approach,
 “ The hoarse and restless surge be dumb.”

Med. No more. The strong-constraining spell
 hath tam’d

The restive blast ; the pliant leaves are fix’d ;
 The fountains rest ; th’ oblivious birds are hush’d ;
 And dead the billows on the silent beach.
 Begone—She comes—I feel the rocking ground,
 Its entrails groan—Its shiv’ring surface parts.
 Scarce can Ætes’ child the sight endure.

[*Ex. 1 Colc.*

[*Hecaté rises in long black garments, with a wreath of snakes, and oaken boughs on her head, and a torch in her hand.*]

Med. O my propitious and congenial goddess,
 Who thy mysterious science hast diffus’d
 Of potent herbs, and necromantic songs
 Through my capacious bosom ; who so long
 Hast been assistant to Medea’s triumphs,
 Now thou behold’st me vanquish’d by despair.

Hec. I know thy suff’rings, daughter ; but to close
 The wounds of anguish, and assuage despair,
 Is not the task of hell.

Med. Then give me vengeance.

Hec. On whom ?

Med. Creüsa ?—No—my high revenge
O'erleaps a trifling maid. Old Æson ?—No.
He is my hero's father. But for Creon——

Hec. The hour is nigh, when yonder flood will rage,
This rock be loosen'd, and its structures nod ;
Then shall the fury, discord, and red zeal,
Thrice steep'd in Stygian fires, avenge thy wrongs.
Farewell.

Med. A moment stay—My yielding heart
Must ask—Will Jason ever more be kind ?

Hec. Search not thy fate.

Med. Unfold it, I enjoin thee,
By him, thou dread'st, by Demogorgon's name.

Hec. Against thyself, unhappy, thou prevail'st.
Ere night's black wheels begin their gloomy course,
What thou dost love shall perish by thy rage ;
Nor thou be conscious when the stroke is given :
Then, a despairing wand'rer, must thou trace
The paths of sorrow in remotest climes.

[*She descends.*]

Med. Destroy my love ! By me shall Jason die ?
Oh ! insupportable ! O pitying Juno !
Assist me sinking to the ground with anguish.

[*Falls to the ground.*]

Enter Colchians and Phæacians.

1 *Colc.* The streaming purple of the western sun
Glows on these tow'rs and pinnacles again,
Prevailing o'er the darkness, which the wand
Of our sage mistress rais'd—Dejecting sight !

Thy faithful servant can refrain no longer,
But tears must wash the furrows of his cheeks.

Med. Ah! how much more my eyes should stream
in torrents!

Ah! how much stronger should my bosom heave,
And sound its agonies in bitter groans
To the remorseless gods! Destroy my Jason!

[*Starting up.*

The dear, false hero! Perish first my art.

1 *Phæa.* "How oft have perjur'd lovers been re-
recall'd

"By strong enchantment? Check these vain com-
plaints."

Hast thou not magic to constrain this wand'rer
Back to thy arms?

Med. I have, but scorn the arts
Which may command his person, not his love.
No, fly to Jason. Let the only charm
Be soft persuasion to attract him hither.

O he is gentle as the summer's breeze,
With looks and gestures fashion'd by the graces.
The messenger be thou, discreet and good.

Medea's pride shall stoop.

1 *Colc.* [*Aside.*] I go—though hopeless.

Med. Mean time will I to yonder wood return,
And some deep-shaded receptacle choose.

There, wrapt in darkness, shall my suff'ring soul
The sense of all its injuries disburthen

In secret murmurs, till its rage be spent. [Exit.

"A *Colc.* Native floods rough with ice [Cretics.

- “ Rushing down mountain-sides,
 “ Whirling thence broken rocks ;
 “ Your discordant waves that sweep [Trochaics.
 “ Harshly o’er their flinty beds,
 “ Yield a more alluring sound
 “ Than the gently-trilling notes
 “ Of the tender Grecian lyre,
 “ Or the swelling strain diffus’d
 “ From the music-breathing flute.
 “ Native groves hoar with frost, [Cretics.
 “ Caverns deep, fill’d with night,
 “ Shagged cliffs, horror’s seat ;
 “ Oh! to these desiring eyes [Trochaics.
 “ Lovely is your gloom which lives
 “ In remembrance ever dear.
 “ You are brighter than my thoughts,
 “ Which despondency o’erclouds,
 “ And in these perfidious climes
 “ Expectation cheats no more.
 “ A Phæa. Torrents swell, tempests rage, [Cretics.
 “ Danger frowns, pain devours,
 “ Grief consumes, man betrays ;
 “ Such our doom in every clime : [Trochaics.
 “ Yet among the thorns of life
 “ Hope attends to scatter flow’rs ;
 “ And Credulity, her child,
 “ Still with kind imposture smooths
 “ Heaving trouble, and imparts
 “ Moments which suspend despair.
 “ Goddess bland, soothing hope, [Cretics.

"In thy smile I confide,
 "And believe Jason comes.
 "All I see delights my eye; [Trochaics.
 "Ev'ry sound enchants my ear;
 "Those rude-featur'd crags are gay;
 "Winds in notes harmonious blow;
 [Turning to the sea.
 "Hoarsest billows murmur joy;
 "And my long-forsaken home
 "Wakes the plaintive muse no more. [Exeunt."

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Enter JASON, and the 1 Colchian.

Jason.

WHY am I summoned?

1 Colc. But once more to greet her.

Jason. And be the mark of scorn.

1 Colc. Remind thee, hero,

Of all thy gen'rous labours ne'er deny'd,

But oft repeated to restore the wretched.

Shall thy distress'd Medea be the first

Thou dost refuse to aid?

Jason. It is too late.

She cast me from her, and we now are strangers.

1 Colc. I have been long a traveller with time,

And through unnumber'd evils have I noted

Those born of anger to be most deplor'd.

Thou look'st no longer on that mutual care—

Your children's welfare. In the wrathful Jason
Benignity is lost, ev'n nature dead
In the fond father.

Jas. When I nam'd our children,
Her ear was deafen'd, and her scornful tongue
Was sharpen'd into outrage.

Colc. See them here,
The lively patterns of their mother's graces,
And sharers in misfortune.

Enter the Children.

Eldest Child. Art thou found
At last, my father? In thy search we pass'd
Through frightful waters, and in roaring winds.
Come to our mother, who of thee complains;
And, with a promise never more to leave us,
Speak comfort to her.

Jas. Comfort!

Colc. Dost thou shrink
To see these pledges of a love like hers?
Oh! thou obdurate, who hast thrown the beauties
Of virtue from thee in thy youthful season,
When ev'ry soft sensation is most warm,
To clasp the cold deformity of guilt!
I have no offspring—Must an old man's eyes
Teach thine their tender lesson? Must a heart,
Which time, and ills, and care might well have sear'd,
Teach thee affection, and a parent's feeling?

Jas. Support me rather, than depress me, Colchian.

I sink—My soul, dissolving in affection,
Hath quite unmann'd me.

Eldest Child. Dost thou grieve to see us?

Jas. No; my poor boys. My spirit bows before you
In love and rev'rence. These indeed subsist
A common care, exacting all regard.
What shall I say?—Not cruel would I seem,
Not ev'n severe—Yet Colchian, let me ask;
Will she——

Colc. Command her, she is all submission.

Jas. “Amid the woes of separating parents,
“Who like the father can protect the offspring?”
Will she commit them to my charge, that comfort,
Prosperity, and honour, be their portion?

Eldest Child. Ah! do not take us from our mother's
arms.

Youngest Child. From our kind mother. Leave us.

Eldest Child. Leave us here to weep with her.

Jas. How constant are these children!
But they were never harass'd by her scorn.

Enter MEDEA, Colchians, and Phæacians.

Med. [stopping short.] The man who knew, and yet
despis'd my worth,

I see before me— Still, thou restiff heart,
Still dost thou rise tumultuous in my bosom;
Oh! thou must bend.

Jas. Well, daughter of Æetes;
Lo! I am here obedient to thy call.

Med. Once was the time, when Jason would have come

Uncall'd, unprompted, but by love alone.

Why do I bring the wasted glass of joy

Back to my view! Oh! torture of remembrance!

Oh, Jason! Jason!

Jas. Speak.

Med. I cannot speak.

Jas. [*Aside.*] My spirit yields—this mute distress
o'erwhelms me.

Med. It is decreed to separate thy name
From mine for ever—First to all restore me?
Which I relinquish'd for thee to my country,
The veneration which that country paid me,
My injur'd parents, and their lost affection.
To my untainted virgin fame restore me,
My once-untroubled, unrepublishing thoughts.
Impossible—Then hear, and yet be just.

Jas. [*Aside.*] Oh! that this morning she had thus
address'd me!

Med. Not love alone, not Hymen's common ties,
But fame and conquest, mutual toils and hardships,
All, which is marvellous and great, conspir'd
To make us one. What stars in distant skies,
What seas, what shores, unvisited before,
Have we not seen together? And what perils
Could each inhospitable clime present,
From which Medea hath not sav'd her Jason?
Our toils at length surmounted, must we part?
My lord—my husband—father of these boys!
Shame, anguish, desperation, rush upon me!
They bind my heart in adamant woe!

They weigh me down—They bear me to the earth.

[*Kneeling with the Children.*

Thus low behold the issue of the Sun

Imploring pity of the man who scorn'd her.

Jas. Canst thou, O Juno, from thy neighb'ring
temple

View this illustrious suff'rer at my feet,

Nor swift destruction from thy altar show'r

On my perfidious head? Why rather, goddess,

“Who hast thy thunder, like thy husband, Jove,”

Didst thou not blast me, when, by furies guided,

I ratify'd but now th' unhallow'd contract?

Med. [*rising.*] What hast thou said?

Jas. Creüsa—is my wife. [*He starts at Medea's
looks, then fixes his eyes stedfastly upon her, and, after
some time, proceeds.*]

Medea—Ha! Have sense and motion left her!

Her colour dies, which once outshone the morn!

Those radiant eyes, whose majesty proclaim'd

The Sun's own progeny, withdraw their lustre!

Oh! thou most injur'd, utter thy complaints!

Give words to anger, and to sorrow tears!

Med. Astonishment! What prodigy is there?

Look yonder!

1 Colc. Go—go, children, to the temple;

Avoid this sight.

[*The Children are led off by a Phæacian to the
temple.*]

Med. What wonderful appearance

Floats on the main, and stems the lofty surge?

Jas. O execrable perfidy! which fills "the loveliest eyes with tears,"

The noblest heart with pangs, the most enlighten'd mind with madness!

Med. See, where yon snowy concave in its bosom,
Collecting all the motion of the winds,
Drives the huge burthen to th' affrighted shore!

Jas. O had the flood, she sees in frantic thought,
Ingulph'd that bark!

Med. [*advancing towards him.*] What art thou, most presumptuous,

Who dar'st approach the limits of this region?
Hast thou not heard, that bulls with brazen feet,
And sleepless dragons, guard the fatal soil?
He hears unterrify'd—I ne'er beheld
Such majesty and grace.

Jas. Debas'd, deform'd
By guilt's polluting hand!

Med. He speaks—What music!
He claims the golden fleece—What means this warmth,
Which prompts my hand to give the radiant prize?
But wilt thou prove then constant—ever kind?
I must, I will believe thee.

1 *Colc.* What remorse,
What consternation petrify his frame!
And she grows wilder.

Med. Hark! With flaming throats
The bulls begin to roar! The forest trembles!
And see, the dragon hither points his course!
See, his huge pinions beat the tortur'd air!

His monstrous body rolls the blast before him,
And sails amidst a whirlwind! Dost thou droop?
Be not dismay'd, my hero! Stand behind.
Attend, ye demons, whose contagious breath
Defiles the sun, who chill the fiercest heart,
And lock in drowsy sloth the nerves of strength!

Jas. Assume thy terrors—Moulder me to dust.
Now call thy demons, whose infernal grasp
May snatch and hurl me to my destin'd pains.
Let me be stretch'd on torn Ixion's wheel,
Or chain'd in burning adamant endure
The tooth of vipers, and the scorpion's sting;
Oh! rather, rather, than behold thy suff'rings!

Med. Why art thou pale and languid? Thou art
safe!

The slumb'ring monster drops his scaly wings!
Thine is the fleece—Medea too is thine!

[*Jason throws himself back, and is received by the
Colchians.*]

Confusion and amazement!—Is he vanish'd?
Where am I?—On a rock, a desert cliff,
Which overhangs the unfrequented waves;
No plant, but moss, to hide its craggy sides;
No shelter nigh my tempest-beaten head:
And lo! two infants clinging to my knees,
Who join my grief, and call Medea mother!
O thou false hero, whither art thou fled?
Hark—The wind only answers my complaint,
It is the sea, which murmurs to my groans!
Ha! what art thou, grim shape embu'd with gore

Why dost thou wave that Stygian torch around?
 Art thou Revenge from Tartarus enlarg'd
 To aid Médea? Come then, shake thy brand
 Before my steps! To perpetrate thy mischief,
 The winds shall lend their swiftness, hell its fiends,
 The sea its fury, and the Sun his flames! [Exit.

1 *Colc.* Resume thy courage.

Jas. Yes, my soul emerges
 From dark confusion, now she knows the worst.
 My sight is clear'd, my enterprise resolv'd,
 And hope enlarges my advent'rous spirit.

1 *Colc.* I hear in wonder, prince. At least prepare
 thee

To guard Medea in her new distress,
 Whom Creon threatens to expel.

Jas. The priestess will be her safeguard till

1 *Colc.* Restrain thy speech,
 And look behind thee. He is sent from Creon
 To drive her hence.

Enter LYCANDER.

Jas. Lycander!

Lyc. Prince, allow me
 With this old Colchian to confer a moment.

1 *Colc.* Nay, speak aloud.

Lyc. Thou know'st my errand, Colchian.

1 *Colc.* Yes, if our princess willingly depart not,
 Thou wilt by force remove her.

Jas. Base and impious!
 Now should these hands, which yok'd the brazen bulls,

Divide thy limbs, and hurl the mangled fragments
From yonder promontory's brow to feast
The scaly monsters in the flood below ;
It were a righteous sacrifice to justice :
But thou art brother to the good Theano.

Lyc. Whom thou dost wrong in me. By her consent,
And on Medea's promise to depart,
I came to guide her with respectful care
To Corinth's verge. Compassion for this princess,
Dread of the king, and rev'rence for the goddess,
With all thy changes, prince, perplex my course ;
That through the maze of this eventful day
I ne'er shall tread securely.

Jas. Nay, Lycander,
If thou art blameless

Lyc. Stop. The king is here
To widen this confusion.

Enter CREON and Attendants.

Creon. [*entering.*] I am told,
That with a pensive mien he left the palace,
And join'd a Colchian of Medea's train.
Gods! he is here—disorder'd—with Lycander
And that old stranger—all in sullen silence
At my appearance—Jason—He replies not !
What are your consultations ? Speak, Lycander !

Lyc. My liege, I cannot, uninform'd like thee.

Creon. Then, as a king and father, I demand
Of thee, Thessalian hero, why, confus'd
At my approach, thy countenance is fall'n ?

Jas. At thy approach ? More formidable pow'rs
Could never awe this heart, which nought hath van-
quish'd

But its own frailties.

Creon. Visions !

Jas. Hear with patience.

The tutelary deity of Corinth

Sits here in awful judgment. Virtue pleads,

And pity weeps before her. Thou and I

At this tribunal show our guilty heads.

Long have we slumber'd on the couch of folly ;

Let us awaken from the cheating dream,

Nor each rebuke the other for his weakness,

But acquiesce in Juno's just decree.

I must annul my contract with thy daughter,

And bid her now eternally farewell.

Creon. Eternally farewell ? I dream—Lycander,
Is not Medea gone ?

Lyc. My lord, the time

Creon. Inactive traitor ! Go and seize that fiend !

Jas. [*to Creon.*] Hold. Thou esteem'st me still the
gentle Jason,

The pliant vassal of my father's will,

And thy ambition. I am chang'd—My heart

Is full of tumult—New-created rage,

Rage at myself, at Æson too, and thee,

Now ravages my bosom—Then be counsell'd,

Nor tempt the wild, ungovernable transports

Of one distemper'd with a foul assemblage

Of guilt, despair, and shame.

Creon. Presumptuous boy !

Do thy exploits by sorcery achiev'd,

Do thy rude trophies from barbarians won,

Exalt thy pride to brave a Grecian monarch ?

When no more, from all inheritance expell'd

A needy exile, thou hast no support,

But from my throne, whose patronage is granted ;

To thy imploring father.

Jas. I reject it,

And own no patron, but my sword and name.

Can I want aid, the Argonautic leader ?

While Hercules, while Telamon and Peleus,

While sacred Orpheus, and the twins of Leda,

Remain unconquer'd to assert my cause ?

Why do I measure folly back to folly,

And here degrade my honours and renown

With boasts resembling thine ? Farewell for ever.

[*Exit cum Cole.*

Creon. Ha ! I perceive his purpose. Haste, collect

[*To one of his attendants.*

A faithful band ; secure Medea's vessel.

Ye blackest demons of resentment, rise ;

March by my side, and brandish you my sceptre !

[*To another of his attendants.*

Thou shut the city-gates ! Let none depart

Without my licence ! I will hold him still,

And cast him prostrate at Creüsa's feet !

Enter THEANO.

Thea. I heard thy threat'ning voice, O blindly fix'd
In disobedience to the queen of gods.

Creon. Dar'st thou, sole auth'ress of thy sov'reign's
ills,

Confront his anger? First on thee, confed'rate
[To Lycander,

With this rebellious, shall my vengeance fall.
By thy design'd misconduct Jason twice
Hath seen Medea.

Lyc. Chance, or heav'n's appointment,
Not my contrivance

Creon. Seize and drag him hence ;
Low in a dungeon hide him ; chain him down
In damps and darkness !

Lyc. Citizens of Corinth,
This place is holy ! In the name of Juno
I claim protection !

Thea. Universal rev'rence,
From your forefathers at the birth of Corinth,
Hath guarded still th' inviolable grove.

Creon. Do ye recoil, ye cowards ? Rebel, traitor,
I will assemble those shall force this refuge,
The seat of priestly craft to aid sedition ;
When thou in torture shalt atone thy crime !

Thea. Once more I warn thee to revere a goddess.

Creon. No, I revere a god, the god of thunders !
Jove, thou didst toil for empire ; so shall Creon,
And show the earth a pattern of thy sway !
For empire thou thy father didst dethrone,
Thy Titan kindred plunge in deepest hell.
The giant, lancing from his hundred hands
A hundred rocks to shake th' Olympian tow'rs
Thou didst with labour vanquish ! Shall these shades

Which awe the vulgar, shall the ready prey
To ev'ry firebrand, or the woodman's ax,
Obstruct a king? No, insolent revolvers,
Soon shall you see me lift the bloody scourge
Of chastisement, unsheath the sword of havoc,
And vindicate my glory! [Exit cum suis.]

Thea. Impious man!
Do thou consult thy safety.

Lyc. Be not anxious.
The king's own rashness shall secure Lycander.
Though years may roll on years, ere we again
Shall meet in peace.

Enter JASON.

Jas. Medea to thy temple
Is fled from all her virgins, who entreat
Thy kind permission to pursue her steps,
Where'er her frenzy leads!

Thea. My help is ready.
And to thy guardian care I trust my brother,
Whom Creon threatens with immediate death.
Yet something whispers, something sure divine,
That other clouds, of black events will break,
Ere a new morning rise on troubled Corinth.
"And we, surviving each portentous storm,
"Derive a sad security from horror." [Exit.]

Lyc. Whate'er this mystic language may import,
Prince, give attention.

Jas. Speak.

Lyc. Thy only course
Is to embark from Corinth with Medea.

Jas. It was my secret and determin'd purpose.

Lyc. Nor yet a secret. Our suspicious tyrant,
If he could rule his discontented subjects,
Would stop thy passage. But thy just design
The public shall befriend, by me alarm'd
At Creon's threat to violate the grove.

Jas. Can I requite thee?

Lyc. Let me serve thee first;
Requite me after, as my wants may dictate.
Is not thy father yonder?

Jas. Let him come.

Go, and expect me shortly on the beach. [*Ex. Lyc.*]

Enter Æson.

Æs. What have I heard? Th' exasperated king—

Jas. Hath told the truth. His daughter I relinquish.

Æs. Off with this bridal pageantry, which mocks
With gay delusion my disastrous age.

Reach me again my sable; from thy hand
I will receive it: from thy barb'rous hand
Let dust be sprinkled on my joyless head.

Nay, rather turn invincible against me;
Lock in that nervous gripe these snowy hairs;

And to the hov'ring eagles on the beach
Cast my disfigur'd relics! Dost thou pause?
Think'st thou, that Jason's father will be seen
Decrepid, tott'ring with distress and years,
A vagabond, a suppliant for protection

Among the happier princes? No, my son,
Though not like thee the faulchion I can wield,
And mow my foes before me, I can die!

Jas. Com'st thou with threat'nings? That tremendous goddess,

Whose piercing eye from yonder fane discerns
Guile in its naked shape through ev'ry garb,
And marks ingratitude for signal vengeance,
Knows that we merit both to die: yet, dying,
We could not expiate our unmatched offence.

Æs. What unaccustom'd, terrifying sternness
Frowns on that aspect? Gentle have I known thee
From infancy to manhood, ne'er before
Have felt thee dreadful!

Jas. Ever from thy fears
Wilt thou take counsel? Can the voice of pity,
Benevolence, and equity, convey
No admonition? O exalt thy thoughts
From this base earth, the mansion of deceit,
Of perjuries and crimes. "Erect thy visage to
"Themis' heav'n-thron'd patroness of justice.
"Invoke her aid, that strengthen'd thou mayst hear,"
Nor be confounded at thy son's resolves.
By no persuasion, artifice, or menace,
My now-reviving dignity of mind
From its own summit shall again descend.

Æs. What would my Jason?

Jas. Take the holy priestess;
Repair to Creon: with united counsels

Him first from impious violence dissuade :
And then——

Æs. To whose protection must I fly ?

Jas. To mine. Abandon Corinth, and at Thebes,
Not three days march from these detested gates,
Expect my presence. Hercules is there ;
My friend, my soldier. He with ev'ry hero,
Who once obey'd my standard, will again
League their auxiliar swords, and save Iolcos.
Let this suffice—If not—Persist no more.

Thy son is fix'd, immoveable as fate. [*Thunder.*

Æs. Thy mightier genius awes me ! I submit !
We are all guilty—Juno so proclaims !

But, oh ! amid these prodigies, my Jason,
Not one alarms me like the rude commotion,
Which shakes thy placid bosom ! Be compos'd.

I will conduct Theano to the king. [*Exit.*

Jas. Look down, connubial goddess, and with hope
[*Jas. turning towards the Temple.*

Let thy appeas'd divinity indulge
A hero off'ring at thy holy shrine
His spirit humbled with repentant sighs.

You too attend, ye favourable gales,
And swiftly waft us to the kind embrace
Of our companion, Orpheus ; who shall breathe
“ His tuneful consolation in a strain
“ Of grief composing energy to charm”
Distraction's rage, till new-born reason smile.
Then with her children, lovely as the mother,
Shall blooming Tempé on its flow'ry lap

Again receive her ; “ while Penéus’ stream
 “ Blends with the flitting warblers on his banks
 “ His murm’ring cadence to delight her ear : ”
 And I once more along th’ accusom’d vale
 Shall, by the lustre of the silent moon,
 Walk by her side attentive, while her tongue
 Unfolds the pow’rs of heav’n’s resplendent train
 Of magic numbers, and mysterious spells,
 And feasts with knowledge my enraptur’d soul. [*Exit.*]

Enter Colchians.

“ Sire of Æetes, god rever’d [*Iambics.*]
 “ By our forefathers on their sands
 “ Bleach’d by the Euxin’s restless foam,
 “ Effulgent origin of day ;
 “ Who with illimitable view,
 “ As from the amber-portall’d east
 “ Thy coursers fiery-man’d proceed,
 “ See’st the deep-bosom’d woes of men ;
 “ Whether plac’d in mildest climes, [*Trochaics.*]
 “ Or beneath thy sultry wheels,
 “ Whether freezing near the pole,
 “ All the various race of care.
 “ Yet to thy sad paternal eye [*Iambics.*]
 “ Can this diversity of grief
 “ Not one present through all thy course
 “ To match thy own Medea’s pain.
 “ Lo ! ev’ry flow’r of wisdom fades
 “ Within her large and fertile breast,
 “ A desert now by tempests rang’d,

“ The seat of wild discordant thoughts.

“ God of wisdom and of light, [Trochaics.

“ O relume her darken'd soul !

“ Let her, though begirt with ills,

“ Still thy progeny be known. [Exeunt.”

ACT V. SCENE I.

THEANO descending from the Temple, ÆSON and Colchians.

Æson.

WHERE is the priestess, Colchian ?

1 Colc. There descending.

Pale consternation overcasts her visage.

Thea. O most portentous, execrable sight !

I led the virgins to rejoin your princess,

Who had escap'd their care—Mysterious Heav'n !

Where was thy pow'r to check a mother's rage ?

Where was thy mercy, when her savage hand

Unclos'd the jaws of slaughter on her children ?

Æs. Oh ! all-surpassing evil !

1 Colc. When and how ? Oh, speak !

Thea. A knife of sacrifice she seiz'd,

And in their tender bosoms plung'd its point !

We found her planted near their welt'ring limbs ;

Her fiery eye-balls on their wounds were fix'd ;

A ghastly triumph swell'd her wild revenge,

And madness mingled smiles with horror !

Æs. Horror

Is my companion now! The race of Jason
One common crime hath swallow'd in its gulph!

Thea. The goddess bow'd in pity from her shrine;
When straight a voice, oracular in thunder,
Whose awful clamour must have reach'd your ears,
Peal'd o'er the rocking temple. 'Impious Creon.'
The voice proclaim'd, 'thy guilt hath fill'd its mea-
sure;

'Then fall, thou victim to the gods of hell!'

Æs. Tremendous sentence!

Thea. I, with fearful steps,
Haste to the palace.

Æs. Make me thy associate,
And I to calm his violence will join.

[*Exeunt Theano and Æson.*

MEDEA rushing from the Temple, Phæacians following.

1 *Colc.* Behold, where, dropping with her children's
blood,

The lost Medea comes!

Med. It is begun!

Now, to complete my vengeance, will I mount
The burning chariot of my bright forefather;
The rapid steeds o'er Corinth will I drive,
And, with the scatter'd lightnings from their manes,
Consume its walls, its battlements and tow'rs,
Its princes, people, palaces, and temples!
Then, as the flames embrace the purple clouds,
And the proud city crumbles from its base,
The demon of my rage and indignation,

All grim and wrapt in terror, shall bestride
The mountainous embers, and denounce abroad
To gods and men my wrongs, and my revenge!

Colc. How is thy wisdom exil'd from thy breast;
Its native seat, nor leaves one trace behind
To show it once was there!

Med. Weep'st thou, old man?

Ha! speak; thou venerable mourner, speak
Thy cause of anguish! Hadst thou not a daughter
Wise like Minerva, like the morning fair,
And once thy dearest comfort? Hath she left thee,
Left thy decrepid head for grief to seize
And dash against the tomb? "Weep, weep, old man,
"The slight remainder of thy days exhaust
"In lamentation; she is lost for ever,
"Lost to herself and thee: and never more
"Shalt thou the beauty of her face contemplate,
"Nor hear again the wisdom of her tongue."

Colc. Thou dost mistake me for thy stern Æetes.
I am but one among th' unnumber'd Colchians,
Who mourn in thee their nation's glory fall'n.

Med. I well deserve this pity—yours—and yours,
Who kindly weep around me. As I pass,
I wade through seas of tears—I hear no sound
But sighs and groans from sorrow-beaten breasts.
Dishevell'd fragments of uprooted hairs
From the wild head of anguish fly about me!

Is it not fitting? When Medea mourns,
Shall not the skies assume their blackest robes,
And scowl upon mankind? Medea sighs;

Shall not hell groan, and heav'n reply in thunder?
It is the offspring of the Sun, who wrings
Her helpless hands, who rends her scatter'd locks!
My heart is cold—The thread of life unwinds.

Now triumph, death—Thy conquest is Medea!

[*She sinks into the lap of a Phæacian.*

¶ *Colc.* Repose her harass'd limbs with tend'rest
care.

If this delirious transport be no more,
Than some short tumult of the heated brain;
Refreshing sleep may cool that seat of thought,
And wand'ring reason sojourn there again.

Essay your vocal pow'r, harmonious maids;
Some new and soothing modulation choose;
Dress in persuasive melody your numbers,
Whose artful cadence from the breaking heart
May steal its cares, and fold them in oblivion.

A Phæacian turning towards the sea.

Azure god, whose active waters [Trochaics.

Beat with endless toil below,
Calm the ruder blasts to slumber;
While to yonder grove, which bends
Stately o'er thy shaded bosom,
Softly-sighing gales aspire.

And, ye zephyrs, which ascending
Fan the plummy verdure there,
Lulling whispers, drowsy murmurs
Through the trembling foliage breathe
O'er the wakeful brow of sorrow
Care beguiling sleep to spread.

Or my gently-soothing measure
 On your downy pinions bear
 Through the grief-distemper'd spirit
 With delusion sweet to steal,
 Till, on music's lap dissolving,
 Madness lull its weary head.

1 *Colc.* Your queen recovers, and her look serene
 Shows, the mild beam of reason shines anew.

Med. Grief, as o'erlabour'd with its cruel office,
 Awhile is pausing, till its strength return.

I will at least possess the short relief
 To see my infants. Sure, my faithful friends,
 From my sad heart no evils can erase
 Maternal gladness at my children's sight.
 Go, lead them from the temple—They will smile,
 And lift my thoughts to momentary joy.

Not gone, my virgins? Wherefore this delay?
 Why all aghast? Why tremble thus your limbs?
 Ha! whence this blood? My hands are dipt in
 slaughter.

Speak, ye dumb oracles of terror, speak! [*Rising.*

Where are my children? My distracted brain
 A thousand dreadful images recalls

Imperfectly remember'd—Speak, I charge you?
 Where are my children?—Silent still and pale!

Enough—Fell pow'rs, your purpose is accomplish'd;
 Medea's suff'rings are complete and full!

1 *Colc.* The swelling passions struggle in her breast,
 And find no vent. My ever-honour'd mistress,
 This is the time for tears and exclamations.

Med. Can exclamations down the wind convey
From these retentive ears my children's groans ?
Or can this murd'rous hand by tears be whiten'd ?

“ Hear, Neptune ! o'er this citadel emerge
“ To reach my crime ; or send the pow'r of whirl-
winds

“ To sweep my footsteps from the stable earth !

“ In rapid flight to Caucasus transport

“ And fix me shiv'ring on the pointed rock !

“ Let Nemesis revive the breathless clay

“ Of my slain infants, to the rav'nous beak

“ Their lips disfigure, and their tender fingers

“ Arm with the vulture's talons ; that their wounds

“ May be imprinted on their mother's breast

“ With Promethèan torture, and her heart

“ In blood bewail the error of her hand !”

Colc. It was the act of ignorance and madness.
Just Themis knows thy purity of mind,
And will, with pity, cleanse that erring hand.

Med. Not the disburthen'd sluices of the skies,
The wat'ry nereids with the ocean's store,
Nor all the tears, which misery hath shed,
Can from the mother wash her children's blood !

Where shall I hide me from the piercing day ?
What man will grant protection to my guilt,
What god afford me safeguard to his altar ?
Thou must alone receive me, thou, O earth !
Then, while I crush my bosom on thy surface,
And grasp the dust within my struggling hands,
Distain my limbs, and strike my head against thee,

At length in pity of my suff'rings sue
 The loit'ring gods to rear the friendly bolt,
 And close my sorrows on thy peaceful breast!

1 *Colc.* See Jason too unconscious of his loss!

Enter JASON.

Jas. Is she restor'd?

1 *Colc.* Restor'd to full sensation
 Of her increas'd afflictions, there she lies.

Jas. "They shall be soon diminish'd! fate at last
 "Hath folded up its inauspicious scroll,
 "And fairer volumes open to our eyes.
 "I see, you doubt me all. That pale dejection
 "Reveals distrust and fear! I tell you, Colchians,
 "Prophetic Themis from her spotless shrine,
 "When she unfolds the oracle of justice,
 "Fills not her priest with more enraptur'd fervor,
 "Than now her present deity supplies
 "To my stability of soul, which marks
 "Success in prospect, and will show me still
 "Not less than Jason in the brightest hour,
 "Yourselves can witness, of his pass'd achievements."
 Perhaps she sleeps! [*Looking attentively on Medea.*]

1 *Colc.* Ah! no.

Jas. Then, dearest woman,
 Look on me, hear me, trust me once again.
 I have resign'd Creüsa and her kingdom;
 I have appeas'd my father; Creon's wrath
 Is ineffectual now: then deign to cast
 One glance on Jason, on thy suppliant husband

Return'd in tears of penitence and shame,
But with redoubled tenderness and truth!

Med. Oh! Jason—Thou and I have once been happy!
What are we now?

Jas. Let thy forgiving breath
Revive my courage fetter'd yet and tame
With thy displeasure; and my active love
Shall soon transport thee from this seat of wo;
Then, as we bound before the fav'ring gale,
Shall fondly whisper, we may still be happy!

Med. [*Starting up.*] Survey these hands!

Jas. What blood is this?

Med. Thy children's.

Jas. Inhuman Creon! could thy malice choose
No other victims than my blameless boys?
I come, incens'd Corinthians, to divulge
This profanation through your madding streets;
Myself will guide your torrent of revolt,
And whelm its billows on this royal savage!

Med. If heav'n had once meant kindly to Medea,
Some tyrant had been found, some other hand,
Than hers alone to spill her children's blood!

The season for upbraiding is no more;
But know, thou wretched like myself, that madness
Arm'd my blind rage against them, and the deed
Now weighs me down to everlasting night!

Jas. [*Falling on his knees.*] O thou, whose equal ba-
lance to mankind
Distributes justice and restoring mercy,
If pray'rs from this polluted breast may reach

Thy pure abode, exert thy righteous pow'r;
 Drop thy assuaging pity on her heart;
 On me exhaust the quiver of thy vengeance!

Med. Was not my portion of distresses large
 Ye pow'rs obdurate? Hath this heart refus'd
 To sigh, these eyes been sparing of their streams?
 Impell'd by indignation, still my spirit
 Would challenge your injustice, which requir'd
 My children's blood to mingle with my tears.

Take back the mighty mind you fram'd to break,
 First rent by anguish, then by guilt deform'd!

[*Draws a poniard.*

[*A voice from the temple.*] Hold, offspring of the Sun;
 arise; repair

To Juno's shrine; reply not, but obey.

“*Med.* Malignant goddess, to prolong my pain,

“*Dost thou unbrace the firmness of my arm!*

“[*She drops the dagger.*

“*Yes, to accuse thee at thy shrine I come!—*

“*The guardian thou of marriage, hast permitted*

“*The violation of connubial faith;*

“*And from that shrine didst pityless behold*

“*The fruit of marriage by a mother's hand*

“*Dash'd on thy pavement!* [Thunder and lightning.

“*Yes, amidst thy lightnings*

“*And triple bolted thunder shalt thou hear*

“*My execrations to provoke thy terrors;*

“*Who, single auth'ress of Medea's wrongs,*

“*Dost now suspend the period of her woes.* [Exit *Med.*”

Jas. Celestial presence, I adore thy greatness;

Yet thy tremendous voice, which rocks these bulwarks,
Appals not me, who bid destruction welcome!
Hope, which cements the structure of the heart,
From mine is moulder'd, and despair is lodg'd
Within the ruins. [*He falls.*]

Enter LYCANDER.

Lyc. Gods! what new reverse
Hath cast the first of heroes to the earth?
Thy mariners expect thee; haste away.
Too high the ferment rises! Oh! recall
Theano's last presage of black events!
The wild impatience of religious rage
Stings ev'ry bosom! "Our Corinthian dames
" Range through the streets with torches in their
 hands,
" Invoking Juno, hymeneal Juno!
" An impulse more than natural directs
" Those armed numbers to some hideous act!
" They breathe demoniac fury on the palace!
" Should Creon meet them he must fall." Rise,
 prince;
I must attend thy flight. Our timely absence
Will save our streets from homicide!
Jas. No, death may reach me too!
Lyc. For pity—Ha! the skies
Share in our tumult, and a bloody veil
Hangs o'er the sick'ning sun! The air wheels round us!
Grim Neptune yonder shakes his stormy trident!

Why heaves the loosen'd rock? Why drop these
clouds

In threat'ning murmurs from their dusky folds
Streak'd with sulphureous gleams?

[*Thunder, lightning, and the stage darken'd.*]

Jas. [*rising.*] This suits my soul
For its infernal journey all prepar'd,
A pale attendant on my children's ghosts
In Tartarus to dwell, while they repose
In blest Elysium!

Colc. Look, the holy priestess
Breaks from the palace in disorder'd haste,
And to her temple flies! In consternation
Old Æson too is nigh.

Enter ÆSON and Thessalians.

Æs. My son! my son!

Jas. If thou dost bring fresh evils thou art welcome!

Æs. We found the harden'd king! My words were
vain,

So were Theano's! With a desp'rate band,
Of life regardless, and contemning Juno,
Against her grove he sallies!

Creon. [*behind the scenes.*] Since no longer
You dread my sceptre, you shall feel my sword;
"Which o'er your mangled carcasses shall hew
"Its purple passage to chastise the author
"Of this revolt, and chase barbarians hence."

Lyc. The king's rash voice. He charges.

[*A shout within.*]

Æs. Hideous roar ! [Thunder and lightning.

O Jove, be merciful !

Lyc. He gives the signal,

And shows the tumult through those livid flames !

Jas. I hear the clang of arms ! Unmov'd and cold,

My heart rejects that once-enliv'ning sound,

And sighs for dissolution ! Pause awhile,

Sad spirit, till Medea's fate is known,

Then prompt my sword to justice on myself !

Æs. That shout denounces triumph !

Lyc. Yes, and safety,

To all but Creon. Give the torrent way !

Enter Corinthians.

1 Cor. Where is the honour'd priestess ? We will
bring,

If she so wills, the sacrilegious head

Of our slain tyrant to her sacred feet !

Lyc. Be silent all ! Theano from the goddess

To this assembly moves ! Night flies before her ;

Earth, seas, and heav'ns are calm'd !

Enter THEANO.

Thea. Ye sons of Corinth,

Old men of Colchis and Thessalians, hear !

At length the gods restrain their vengeful rod !

The dreadful scene is clos'd ! Iolchian prince,

Thou from Æetes' daughter art disjoin'd !

Look, where the goddess through th' aerial champain

Sends in a chariot, drawn by winged dragons,

That all-transcending woman into climes
Remote, but whither is from thee conceal'd !

[Thunder.

“ Enter MEDEA in a Chariot.

“ Med. *Fine breathing couriers through the fields of air,*

“ *Arrest your course obedient to this wand ;*

“ *Ah ! what detains me longer in the sight*

“ *Of hateful Corinth ? but on thee to cast*

“ *A parting look, and some forgiving tears,*

“ *Shed on thy errors, Jason—Oh, farewell !*

“ *Constrain'd by Juno, and my parent gods,*

“ *Who have subdu'd my anger, not my grief,*

“ *O'er seas and earth to wander and explore*

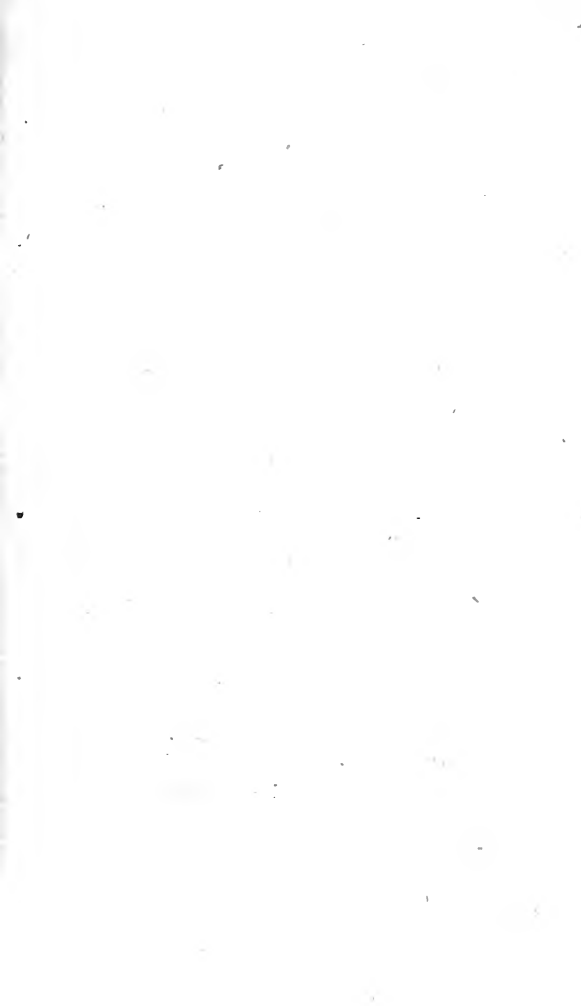
“ *The devious steps of destiny I go:* [Thunder.

“ [Exit in the chariot.”

Jas. Heav'n guide her fortunes. This shall govern
mine. [*Offers to fall on his sword, but is prevented.*

Thea. Unmanly desperation ! Will the grave
Hide thy disgrace, or ill-tongu'd rumour die,
When thou art ashes ? No. Recall thy manhood !
Thou hast a father's kingdom to redeem !
Go, save a nation ! These afflicted maids,
These aged Colchians, to their homes restore.
Thus shall the censure, which thy frailty merits,
Be chang'd to blessings on thy gen'rous deeds,
And time's light finger loosen from thy breast
Its root of care, till peace of mind return !

[Exeunt omnes.







De Wilde pinxt

Nay.

MISS FARREN as PENELOPE.

I will not take it on such conditions.

London. Printed for J. Bell, British Library v. Strand. June 9. 1792.

THE
GAMESTERS.

A
COMEDY,
AS ALTERED FROM
SHIRLEY AND C. JOHNSON.

ADAPTED FOR
THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,
AS PERFORMED AT THE
THEATRES-ROYAL,
DRURY-LANE AND COVENT-GARDEN.

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOKS,
By Permission of the Managers.

“ The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas, are omitted in the Representation.”

LONDON :

Printed for the Proprietors, under the Direction of
JOHN BELL, British-Library, STRAND,
Bookseller to His Royal Highness the PRINCE of WALES.

M DCC XCII.



THE GAMESTERS.

THIS Comedy is an alteration from SHIRLEY and C. JOHNSON by GARRICK. It is a busy Play, and contains that sort of involved incident, without which the finest dialogue and the purest sentiment is but thrown away upon an audience.

The Critics have been divided touching the propriety of certain alterations in the present piece. The moderate opinion seems to be, that, from the pruning hand of our great Master of stage effect, it acts better, but that something is subducted from the pleasure of the closet perusal, given by the original.

It has unquestionably scenes of considerable smartness, and incidents that interest very divertingly; but yet the language is generally rugged—it is an antique, but the original die was never of the purest execution.

PROLOGUE.

Written and spoken by Mr. GARRICK.

*WHENE'ER the wits of France take pen in hand,
To give a sketch of you, and this our land;
One settled maxim through the whole you see——
To wit—their great superiority!
Urge what you will, they still have this to say,
That you who ape them, are less wise than they.
'Tis thus these well-bred letter-writers use us;
They trip o'er here; with half an eye peruse us;
Embrace us, eat our meat, and then—abuse us.
When this same play was writ, that's now before ye,
The English stage had reach'd its point of glory!
No paltry thefts disgrac'd this author's pen,
He painted English manners, English men;
And form'd his taste on Shakspeare and old Ben.
Then were French farces, fashions, quite unknown;
Our wits wrote well, and all they writ their own:
These were the times when no infatuation,
No vicious modes, no zeal for imitation,
Had chang'd, deform'd, and sunk the British nation.
Should you be ever from yourselves estrang'd,
The cock will crow, to see the lion chang'd!*

*To boast our liberty is weak and vain,
While tyrant vices in our bosoms reign:
Not liberty alone a nation saves;
Corrupted freemen are the worst of slaves.
Let Prussia's sons each English breast inflame;
O be our spirit, as our cause, the same!
And as our hearts with one religion glow,
Let us with all their ardours drive the foe,
As Heav'n had rais'd our arm, as Heav'n had given the
blow!*

*Would you rekindle all your ancient fires?
Extinguish first your modern, vain desires:
Still it is yours, your glories to retrieve;
Lop but the branches, and the tree shall live:
With these erect a pile for sacrifice!
And in the midst—throw all your cards and dice!
'Then fire the heap; and as it sinks to earth
The British genius shall have second birth!
Shall, phœnix-like, rise perfect from the flame,
Spring from the dust, and mount again to fame!*

Dramatis Personae.

COVENT-GARDEN.

Men.

WILDING,	-	-	-	-	Mr. King.
HAZARD,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Farren.
ACRELESS,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Egan.
LITTLESTOCK,			-	-	Mr. Macready.
SELLAWAY,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Davies.
BARNACLE,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Quick.
Nephew,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Edwin.
DWINDLE,	-	-	-	-	Mr. C. Powell.
Page,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Simmons.
Box-keeper,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Rock.
Servant,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Farley.
CARELESS,	-	-	-	-	-
Drawer,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Ledger.

Women.

Mrs. WILDING,	-	-	-	-	Mrs. Pope.
PENELOPE,	-	-	-	-	Mrs. Merry.



THE GAMESTERS.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Enter WILDING and PENELOPE.

Wilding.

WHAT need you be so coy now ?

Pen. Pray collect

Yourself ; remember what you are, and whose :
You have a virtuous gentlewoman ; think
Upon your faith to her.

Wild. Think of a fiddle-stick !

While you put me in mind of what I am,
You quite forget yourself. My wife, I allow,
Your kinswoman far off ; to whom, a widow,
Your father left you, with a handsome fortune ;
Which, by her marriage, I have in possession,
And you too : therefore, as you hope to be
In due time worth a husband, think upon't.
I can deserve respect ; then wisely use me,
As you would keep me.

Pen. 'This is but a trial

Of my strength; for I know you have more charity,
(Should I consent) than shipwreck your own honour.
But take heed, sir, how you proceed to jest
With frailty; lest too much disordering
Your good thoughts, you forget, and by degrees
Lose your own innocence.

Wild. I jest! you'd have me swear;
And yet you should not think it such a wonder
To love, sure. Come, shake of this frost; it spoils
thee;

Your nature should be soft and flexible.
Perhaps, thou think'st—I do not love thee heartily:
I know not how to give thee better testimony,
Than by offering myself to thee: if my wife die,
(As ten to one she's not immortal) we
May couple t'other way.

Pen. What argument is this
To assure the truth of your affection to me,
That break your vows to her?

Wild. Oh! great argument,
An' you observe: she was a widow when
I marry'd her; thou'rt a young maid, and handsome:

Pen. Can you be so ungrateful, then, to punish
Whom you should reward? Remember, sir, she
brought you

That wealth you have; took you from nothing——

Wild. There's reason then for nothing I should love
her.

Hang her estate! I was held a proper man;
And in that point deserv'd her, an' she had millions:

An' I were free again, I would not draw
I' th' team of marriage, for ten subsidies ;
Not to command a province.

Pen. Yet, you said,
Were your wife dead, you'd marry me.

Wild. Only thee, and nobody else.

Pen. 'Twere dangerous to have many.

Wild. To have one is little less than madness. Come,
wo't promise ?

Enter Mrs. WILDING, behind.

Pen. What ?

Wild. A'course you know my meaning.

Mrs. Wild. I do not like this whispering : why with
her

So close in parley ?

Wild. Wo't thou do this feat for me ?

'Tis finish'd in a pair of minutes.

Pen. Yes, upon one condition.

Wild. What condition ?

Pen. That your wife give consent ; you shall then
command me. *[Exit.]*

Wild. I'll undertake to go a pilgrimage
To Jerusalem, and return sooner. Would
I did not love thee, love thee infinitely——
That's all ; 'two'not do——My wife ! I hope
She has not eaves-dropp'd us. What pity 'tis
She cannot find the way to heav'n. I should not
Trouble her in haste. These wives will have no con-
science,

But stick to us everlastingly. Now, lady,
How did your monkey rest last night ? you look
As you had not said your prayers yet ; I won't disturb
you.

Mrs. Wild. Pray, sir, stay ; let me but know
Some reason, why you use me thus unkindly ?
If I have been guilty of offence, I am not
Past hope, but with the knowledge of my error
'Tis possible I may amend and please you.

Wild. I do not like you.

Mrs. Wild. You did marry me.

Wild. Yes, I did marry you ; here's too much record for't.

I would there were a parson to unmarry us !
If any of our clergy had that faculty,
He might repair the old, and build as many
New abbeys through the kingdom, in a twelvemonth.
Shall I speak truth ? I never much affected thee :
I marry'd thee for thy soul's sake, not thy body :
Yet I do not hate thee. Witness, I dare kiss ;
Hold thee by the hand, sleep in the same house,
Nay, in the same bed sometimes ; but——

Mrs. Wild. What, sir ?

Wild. You have a scurvy quality, wife ; I told you
on't.

Mrs. Wild. Once more ; and I'll correct it.

Wild. You are given to be jealous. I cannot
Ramble abroad in gentlemen's company
Whole days, lie out a nights, but you suspect
I am wanton. 'Tis ill done ; it becomes no modest

Woman that loves her husband, to be jealous,
 Whate'er she sees or hears; mend, mend this fault,
 You do not know how it may work upon me.
 Some wives will bid their husband's leverets welcome;
 Nay, keep house together; but you ne'er did it:
 Know their own chamber, and not come forth
 Till they be sent for. These morals I have read
 Before now, but you put them not in practice;
 Nor, for aught I perceive, have disposition to't.
 Therefore I'll take my course.

Mrs. Wild. To shew I can
 Be obedient to my griefs; from this time, sir,
 I wo't not urge with one unwelcome syllable
 How much I am neglected; I'll conceal it
 Too from the world: your shame must needs be mine.
 I see you do not love me; where your heart
 Hath plac'd a worthier thought, let it dwell ever;
 Freely pursue your pleasures; I will have
 No passion that shall mutiny; you are,
 And shall be lord of me still.

Wild. I like this, if it be no disguise.

Mrs. Wild. Do not suspect me;
 I would swear by a kiss, if you'd vouchsafe it;
 You shall not keep a servant that shall be more humble.

Wild. And obedient to my will?

Mrs. Wild. In all things.

Wild. I'll try you then.

[*Aside.*

But if I bring home a mistress——

Mrs. Wild. I'll be patient.

Wild. What if there be one
Already that does please me ? will you not
Repine, and look awry upon's, when we
Make much of one another ?

Mrs. Wild. So you will but sometimes smile on me
too, I'll endeavour.

Wild. Well said : this may do good upon me ; as
I find you prompt in this, I may consider
Other matters : to tell you true, I like
Your kinswoman.

Mrs. Wild. How !

Wild. How ? why as a man should like her ; but
I find her cold and peevish. How she may
Be brought about, I know not. 'Twould shew well,
And be a precedent for other wives,
If you would put your help to't.

Mrs. Wild. Goodness bless me !

Wild. One woman with another can do more,
In such a cause, than twenty men. I do not
Wander, you see, out of the blood ; this will
Be a way to justify your obedience.

Mrs. Wild. You shew a tyrant now ; and, stead of
framing
My soul to patience, murder both.

Wild. Nay, nay, child, if you are out of humour at
trifles, I must leave you. [Going.

Mrs. Wild. Stay, sir.

Wild. Not now, my dear—when you are cool again
you may expect me. [Exit singing.

Mrs. Wild. This is not to be borne ; my patience is worn out ; and, one way or other, I must have some respite to my tortures. [Exit.]

SCENE II.

The Street. Enter WILDING.

Wild. I have gone too far, a conscience—this may spoil all ; and, now I think upon it, I was a coxcomb to discover any party. I must deny it again, and carry things more closely. But, let me see, why do I use this wife of mine thus terribly ? She gave me all—ay, that all's the devil ! my desires are satisfied, and I have not a grain of inclination left ; variety is the thing—in eating, music, wine, or women ; nothing but variety gives the palate to them all : now, my wife is always the same tune, the same dish, the same dull bottle of port ; and, to sum up all, the same woman—'twill never do. How now, Will ?

Enter HAZARD.

Haz. How now, Will ! is that all ?
Look up, and ask me a question like a man ;
What, melancholy ?

Wild. No, no ; a toy, a trifle.

Haz. That should be a woman ; who is't thou art thinking on ?

I have been of your counsel—

Wild. I was thinking—o' my wife.

We have had a dialogue; come, thou know'st my bosom.

Haz. When dost mean to use her well?

Wild. I know not; but I have offer'd fair conditions.

She is very confident I do not dote

Upon her beauty: I have told her, sirrah,

I love her kinswoman.

Haz. Y'are not mad?

Wild. The world's deceiv'd in her; she'll give me leave

To ramble where I list; and feed upon

What best delights my appetite.

Haz. He that has

An ambition to be strangled in his sleep,

May tell his wife he loves another woman.

Wild. But I was not content with this. Because

The other wench was somewhat obstinate,

I must needs urge my wife to mollify

And mold her for my purpose.

Haz. And she consented?

Wild. No, 'twould not do:

This went again her stomach, and we parted.

Haz. Next time you see her, look to be presented
With your mistress' nose for this. Dost think a woman

Can be so patient, to know her rival

I' th' same roof, and leave her eyes to see thee

Again? I am sorry for thee.

Wild. I am confident

She dare not: but for all that, would I had
 Been less particular.

Haz. Come, I love thee well;
 But not thy wit, to carry things no handsomer:
 You must unravel again, and make your wife
 Believe you did but try her.

Wild. Pr'ythee drop the subject; don't set my
 teeth on edge with talking so much about my wife.
 Canst not see by my wry faces, that 'tis holding the
 phial to my nose, after I have taken the physic. Pr'y-
 thee no more of her. Now tell me, what brought thee
 this way?

Haz. I was going to meet old Barnacle.

Wild. Barnacle! what can such opposites possibly
 do together? He wants you to beat somebody for
 him.

Haz. Faith, Jack, I have no superfluous valour to
 dispose of——I have just enough to defend myself
 from the impertinence of some, and the villany of
 others.

Wild. A gamester by profession, Will, should be
 always ready to draw his sword, as the circumstances
 of play and the support of his honour may require it.

Haz. Yes, there are gamesters who are ever draw-
 ing their swords to support their honour, and of con-
 sequence are for ever fighting.

Wild. And they find their account in't: for gentle-
 men in general had much rather submit to have their
 pockets picked, than run the risque of having their
 throats cut: but, pr'ythee, Hazard, how do you es-

cape these fire-drakes; for you are pretty open and direct in your censures upon 'em.

Haz. What will they get by quarrelling with me? they know I dare fight, and that I hate a scoundrel; and whenever madam Fortune is pleased to jilt, and strip me, I always fall upon her bullies; and as they don't love fighting for fighting sake, they call me an odd fellow, and let me alone.

Wild. Ha, ha, ha! but to return to Barnacle——What is become of that genius his nephew?

Haz. Just now returned from college, as great a genius as he went——He has been exposing himself these two years at the university, in the characters of the rake and the scholar, and now is come up to make the same figure in town.

Wild. Is he not an insufferable blockhead?

Haz. Yes, an insufferable blockhead; but not absolutely ignorant. His tutor has got words into him without ideas; so his folly and scholarship set one another off to a most ridiculous advantage.

Wild. What Greek and Latin he has, I suppose, lies in his head, as his uncle's money does in the chest, without being of the least use to himself, or any body else.

Haz. You are mistaken, sir; his uncle will spare no expence to make his hopeful kinsman a fine gentleman.

Wild. Then the matter is out——He comes to bind him apprentice to you.

Haz. Your humble servant.

Wild. His debauchery will become him as little as his learning; so that in time we shall see the hopeful youth not only contemptible but infamous.

Haz. Is not that the old gentleman yonder, coming this way?

Wild. It is, indeed; and therefore I shall leave you to your entertainment. Squeeze a few hundreds out of him if you can—I must back to my kinswoman—I can't rest without her—Shall I see you at the old place this afternoon? [Exit.

Haz. You shall—I wish I could get this Penelope out of his hands. She's a charming girl, and, though she has not quite money enough to be made a wife of by one of no fortune, yet she has too many good qualities to be made a strumpet of by such a fellow as Wilding—He will not succeed, surely—What should be the business, that old Barnacle has desired my conference? 'tis not to lend me money sure—He's here.

Enter BARNACLE.

Barn. Master Hazard!

Haz. I was coming to you, sir.

Barn. I am fortunate to prevent so great a trouble; There is a business, sir, wherein I must desire your favour.

Haz. Mine? command it, sir.

Barn. Nay, I'll be thankful too; [Shewing a purse of money.] I know you are

A gentleman.

Haz. That should incline you to think
I am not mercenary.

Barn. I beseech you, sir,
Mistake me not; rewards are due to virtues,
And honour must be cherished.

Haz. What's your purpose?
Pray clear my understanding.

Barn. To be plain, sir,
You have a name i' th' town for a brave fellow.

Haz. How, sir! you do not come to jeer me?

Barn. Patience, I mean you have the opinion
Of a valiant gentleman; one that dares
Fight and maintain your honour against odds.
The sword-men do acknowledge you; the bailiffs
Observe their distance; all the swaggering puffs
Strike their top-sails. I have heard them in the streets
Say—There goes daring Hazard; a man careless
Of wounds; and though he has not had the luck
To kill so many as another, dares
Fight with all them that have.

Haz. You have heard this?

Barn. And more, and more; mistake not,
I do not all this while account you in
The list of those are called the blades, that roar
In brothels, and break windows, that swear dammees,
“To pay their debts; and march like walking ar-
mories,
“With poniard, pistol, rapier, and battoon,”
As they would murder all the king's liege people,
And blow down streets: no, I repute you valiant

Indeed, and honoured ; and come now, without
 More ceremony, to desire your favour ;
 Which, as you are a gentleman, I hope
 You'll not deny me.

Haz. Though your language
 Be something strange, yet because I think you dare
 not

Intend me an abuse, I do not question it.
 Pray to the point ; I do not think you're come
 To have me be your second.

Barn. I am no fighter ;
 Though I have seen a fence-school in my days,
 And cracked a cudgel ; yet I come about
 A fighting business.

Haz. You would have me beat somebody for you.

Barn. Not so, noble Hazard : yet
 I come to intreat a valiant courtesy,
 Which I am willing to requite in money ;
 I have brought gold to give you payment, sir ;
 'Tis a thing you may easily consent to,
 And 'twill oblige me ever.

Haz. Be particular.

Barn. Then thus ; you are not ignorant I have a
 nephew, sir.

Haz. You have so.

Barn. One that's like
 To be my heir ; the only one of my name
 That's left : and one that may in time be made
 A pretty fellow.

Haz. Very well ; proceed.

Barn. You know, or you imagine, that I have
A pretty estate too.

Haz. You're held a main rich man, sir ;
In money able to weigh down an alderman.

Barn. I have more than I shall spend, now I come
close ;
I would have this nephew of mine converse with gentlemen.

Haz. And he does so.

Barn. I'll not pinch him in's allowance ;
The University had almost spoiled him.

Haz. With what ?

Barn. With modesty ; a thing, you know,
Not here in fashion : but that's almost cured ;
I would allow him to be drunk——

Haz. You may, sir.

Barn. Or any thing, to speak him a gentleman.

Haz. With your favour, sir, let me be bold a little
To interrupt you ; were not you a citizen ?

Barn. 'Tis confessed, sir.

Haz. It being a thriving way,
A walk wherein you might direct your nephew,
Why d'ye not breed him so ?

Barn. I apprehend ;
And thus I satisfy you : we that had
Our breeding from a trade, cits as you call us,
Though we hate gentlemen ourselves, yet are
Ambitious to make all our children gentlemen :
In three generations they return again ;
We for our children purchase land ; they brave it

I' th' country, beget children, and they sell ;
 Grow poor, and send their sons up to be 'prentices :
 There is a whirl in fate. The courtiers make
 Us cuckolds ; mark, we wriggle into their
 Estates ; poverty makes their children citizens,
 Our sons cuckold them. A circular justice !
 The world turns round. But once more to the pur-
 pose.

Haz. To your nephew.

Barn. This nephew of mine I do love dearly ;
 He is all my care ; I would be loth to lose him ;
 And to preserve him both in life and honour
 I come to you.

Haz. Now you come to me indeed, sir.

Barn. What shall I give you, sir, to let him——

Haz. What ?

Barn. Pray, be not angry.

Haz. By no means.

Barn. There is no such security i' th' world ;
 I'll pay for't heartily.

Haz. For what ?

Barn. What shall I give you, troth, and let him——

Haz. What ?

Barn. Beat you, sir.

Haz. How ?

Barn. Nay, do not, sir, mistake me : for although
 I name it coarsely, I desire it should be
 With your consent, not otherwise : my nephew
 Is raw, and wants opinion ; and the talk
 Of such a thing, to have beat a gentleman

That all the town's afraid of, would be worth
In's credit, heaven knows what ! Alas, you cannot
Blame a kind uncle, to desire all means
To get his nephew fame, and keep him safe ;
And this were such a way !

Haz. To have me beaten.

Barn. You're i' th' right ; but do not misconceive
me.

Under your favour, my intention is not
He should much hurt you : if you please to let him
Quarrel, or so, at tavern, or where else
You shall think fit ; and throw a pottle-pot——

Haz. At my head ?

Barn. Yes, or a bottle ; still under your correction ;
Only that some of your acquaintance, and
Gentlemen may take notice, that he dares
Affront you, and come off with honour handsomely.
Look, here's a hundred pieces ! tell 'em i' th' ordi-
nary ;

They're weight, upon my credit : play 'em not
Against light gold : this is the prologue to
My thanks ; besides my nephew shall in private
Acknowledge himself beholden.

Haz. A hundred pieces ! I want money.

Barn. Right.

Haz. You give me this to let your nephew beat me ?

Barn. Pray, take me with ye ; I do not mean he
should

By beating hurt you dangerously. You may
Contrive the quarrel, so that he may draw

Some blood ; or knock you o'er the pate, and so forth ;
And come off bravely : this is all.

Haz. Well, sir ;

You do not mean, you say, he should endanger
My life or limbs ; all you desire, if I
Mistake not, is to get your nephew credit ;
That being fleshed, he may walk securely, and be held
Valiant, by gaining honour upon me.

Barn. You understand me right.

Haz. I'll put it up ;

Pray send your nephew to me ; we'll agree.

Barn. Agree, sir ? You must quarrel, and he must
beat you,

Else 'tis no bargain.

Haz. Not before

We have concluded how things shall be carried.

Barn. I must desire your secrecy, and——

Haz. Here's my hand.

Barn. And there's my money.

Haz. Your nephew shall be a blade.

Barn. Why there's ten pieces more, 'cause you
come off

So freely ; I'll send him to you.

Haz. Do so ; why this, if the dice favour me, may
bring all

My lands again. Be sure you send him ; but

No words ! for your nephew's credit.

Barn. Mum—I thank you heartily. [Exit.

Haz. Be there such things i' th' world ? I'll first to
the tavern ;

There I am staid for : gentlemen, I come ;
I'll be beat every day for such a sum.

[Exit.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Enter Mrs. WILDING and the Page.

Mrs. Wilding.

WHERE'S your master, boy ?

Page. I know not, mistress.

Mrs. Wild. Come nearer, sirrah ; you are of your
master's

Council sometimes. Come, be true in what
I shall desire, and I shall find a time for your reward.

Page. How d'ye mean, mistress ?

We pages meet rewards of several natures :

This great man gives us gold, that lady gloves,

T'other silk stockings, roses, garters : but

The lady and mistress whom we serve in ordinary,

Reserves another bounty for our closeness.

Mrs. Wild. I see you can be a wag ; be but just to
me, and secret——

Page. As your looking-glass,

That in your absence cannot be corrupted

To betray your complexion.

Mrs. Wild. What private mistresses does Master
Wilding visit ?

Page. Who, my master ?

Alas, forsooth ! d'ye think he lets me know ?

Mrs. Wild. Nay, nay, dissemble not.

Page. I hire a coach

Sometimes or so, but ride always i' the boot :

I look at nobody but the passengers.

I do not sit i' the same box at plays with them.

I wait at tavern, I confess, and so forth ;

And when he has supp'd, we must have time to eat too :

And what should I trouble my conscience

With being too officious till I am call'd for ?

'Tis true, he waits upon the ladies home ;

But 'tis so dark, I know not where they dwell ;

And the next day we have new' ones, 'las ! mere
strangers

To me, and I should be unmannerly

To catechize them. If now and then there be-

Any superfluous, cast waiting-woman,

There be so many serving-men about her,

I cannot come to ask a question ;

And how should I know any thing ?

Mrs. Wild. I see you are old enough for vice.

Page. Alas, forsooth !

You know 'tis ill to do a thing that's wicked,

But 'twere a double sin to talk on't too,

If I were guilty ; beside, forsooth, I know

You would ne'er trust me again, if I should tell you.

Mrs. Wild. Thou art deceiv'd, it shall endear thee
more.

Page. I must beseech you

To be excus'd. My master is my master ;

My feet are at your service, not my tongue :

I would not forfeit my honour for the world.

Mrs. Wild. Hence, thou old in villany !
But 'tis in vain to chide. Leave me, and bid
Mistress Penelope come hither.

Page. Yes, forsooth—She is so frumpish. [Exit.

Mrs. Wild. I know not which way to begin. To me
He has betray'd he loves her. Here she is ;
Now to the trial.

Enter PENELOPE.

Pen. Will you be sad still, cousin ? Why d'ye
grieve ?

Be kinder to yourself. Trust me, I weep,
When I am alone, for you.

Mrs. Wild. Sorrow and I
Are taking leave, I hope ; and these are only
Some drops after the cloud has wept its violence.
Were one thing finish'd, I should ne'er be sad more ;
And I cannot despair to know it done,
Since the effect depends upon your love.

Pen. My love ! 'Tis justice you command my service.

I would I were so happy.

Mrs. Wild. Make me so,
By your consent to my desire.

Pen. Pray, name it.

Mrs. Wild. I only ask your love ; pray, give it me.

Pen. My love ! Why do you mock my poor heart,
which

Pours all it has upon you ? You're possess'd of that
already.

Mrs. Wild. You examine not
The extent of my request ; for when you have
Given what I ask, your love, you must no more
Direct it as you please : the power's in me
How to dispose it.

Pen. And you shall for ever.
I have no passion that shall not know obedience to you.

Mrs. Wild. Your love, by gift
Made mine; I give my husband. Do you love him ?

Pen. I always did.

Mrs. Wild. But in a nearer way :
Love him as I do ?

Pen. I understand you not ; or if you do
Suspect I cherish any lawless flame——

Mrs. Wild. Thou art too innocent ; be less, and do
An act to endear us both. I know he loves thee ;
Meet it, dear coz ; 'tis all I beg of thee.
I know you think it a most strange request ;
But it will make me fortunate.

Pen. Grief, I fear,
Hath made her wild—D'ye know what you desire ?

Mrs. Wild. Yes, that you love my husband. “Mo-
desty

“ Will not allow me to discourse my wish
“ In every circumstance.” But think how desperate
My wound is, that would have so strange a cure.
He'll love me then : and, trust me, I'll not study
Revenge, as other wives perhaps would do,
But thank thee : and indeed an act like this,

So full of love, with so much loss and shame too,
For mine and his sake, will deserve all duty.

Pen. I have no patience to hear more ; and could
I let in a thought you meant this earnest,
I should forget I knew you : but you cannot
Be fallen from so much goodness. I confess
I have no confidence in your husband's virtue ;
He has attempted me, but shall hope sooner
To leave a stain upon the sun, than bribe
Me to so foul a guilt. I have no life
Without my innocence ; and you cannot make
Yourself more miserable than to wish it from me.
Oh, do not lose the merit of your faith
And truth to him, tho' he forget himself,
By thinking to relieve yourself thus sinfully !
But sure you do but try me all this while.

Mrs. Wild. And I have found thee pure ; be still
preserv'd so.

But he will straggle farther——

Pen. Cherish hope,
He rather will come back. Your tears and prayers
Cannot be lost.

Mrs. Wild. I charge thee, by thy love,
Yet be rul'd by me. I'll not be so wicked
To tempt thee in a thought shall blemish thee :
But as thou wouldst desire my peace, and his
Conversion, if his wantonness last with him,
Appear more tractable ; allow him so much
Favour, in smile and language, that he may not
Think it impossible to prevail at last.

Pen. This may engage him farther, and myself to a dishonour.

Mrs. Wild. It shall work our happiness,
As I will manage things. 'Tis but to seem:
A look will cost thee nothing, nor a smile,
To make his hopes more pleasing. On my life,
Thou shalt be safe both in thy fame and person.
Will you do this for my sake?

Pen. I'll refuse no danger, if I suffer not in honour,
To do you any service.

Mrs. Wild. I have cast it
Already in my brain; but do not yet
Enquire my purpose. As his folly leads
Him to pursue you, let me know, and I'll
By fair degrees acquaint you with my plot,
Which, built on no foul ends, is like to prosper.
And see how aptly he presents himself——
Pr'ythee, seem kind, and leave the rest to me.
He shall not see me. [Exit.]

Enter WILDING.

Wild. How now, coz? Was that
My wife went off?

Pen. Yes, sir.

Wild. Let her go. What said she to thee?

Pen. Nothing.

Wild. Thou art troubled!

Pen. Pray, to your knowledge, sir, wherein have I
Done injury to you or her?

Wild. Has she abus'd thee ?

I'll chastise her.

Pen. By no means, sir—I steal away your heart,
And meet at stol'n embraces.

Wild. Does she twit thee ? I'll kick her like a foot-
ball,
Say but the word.

Pen. By no means think upon't. I have forgiven her.
You sha' not, sir, so much as frown upon her ;
Pray, do not, as you love me. We must study
A more convenient revenge.

Wild. How is this ?
I pr'ythee, if she has been peremptory,
Which was none of our articles, let me instruct thee
How we shall be reveng'd.

Pen. Sir, I acknowledge
The growth and expectation of my fortune
Is in your love ; and tho' I would not wrong her—
And yet, to have my innocence accus'd,
Is able to pervert it. Sir, your pardon ;
I have been passionate. Pray, love your wife.

Wild. No, no, I'll love thee ; indeed, indeed, I will.
Is she jealous ?

Pen. You know she has no cause.

Wild. Let us be wise, and give her cause : shall's,
coz ?

Pen. Sir, if I be a trouble to your house,
Your breath shall soon discharge me. I had thought
The tie of blood might have gain'd some respect.

Wild. Discharge thee the house ! I'll discharge her,

And all her generation, thee excepted ;
And thou shalt do't thyself ; by this thou shalt.

[*Kisses her.*

Ha ! she comes to with more freedom : this is better
Than if my wife had pleaded for me. [*Aside.*] Pen,
Thou shalt be mistress, wilt thou ? Come, thou shalt :
She's fit for drudgery.

Pen. Oh, do not say so !

Wild. Then I wo' not. But I love thee for thy
spirit,

'Cause thou wilt be reveng'd. Punish her jealousy
The right way : when 'tis done, I would choose
To tell her : it may kick up her heels another way.

Pen. Tell her what ? You make me blush.

Wild. No, no, I'll tell nobody ; by this hand, I
will not. [*Kisses it.*] Stay, stay, I have a diamond will
become this finger : 'tis in my drawer above ; I'll
fetch it straight.

Pen. Oh, by no means !

Wild. 'Tis thine, 'tis thine, my girl ! my soul is
thine !

[*Exit.*

Pen. Indeed, Mrs. Wilding, this is going a little
too far for you—There is something so like reality
in all I have been doing, that I am more than half
in a fever with it already. This playing with fire is a
very foolish thing ; but, tho' I burn my fingers, I
must go thro' with it.

Enter WILDING, with a Ring.

Wild. Here it is, Pen, as sparkling as thyself.

Wear it, and let my wife stare out her eyes upon't.

Pen. I wo' not take't on such conditions.

Wild. Take it on any, take it on any——
She's come about.

[*Aside.*]

Enter Page.

Page. Sir, Master Hazard desires your company at the tavern: he says there are none but gentlemen of your acquaintance, Mr. Careless, Mr. Littlestock, and Mr. Sellaway.

Wild. He must excuse me—Get you gone.

Pen. Stay, stay, boy—As you love me, go, sir—Your master will come. [*Exit Page.*] Have no suspicions that I wish your absence. I'll wear your gift, and study to be grateful.

Wild. I'll leave my boy behind; and should my wife be set on gossiping this afternoon, pretend thou, girl, some slight indisposition to keep at home; and when she's gone, let me but know it, and I'll leave the happiest run of dice to catch a moment with thee.

Pen. I want not such strong proofs of your regard; I will not stop your fortune.

Wild. Then I'll not leave you now.

Pen. You must, indeed you must—When I can oblige you, I shall not prove ungrateful. [*Exit.*]

Wild. Both wind and tide are for me!—No talk now of wife's consent; I'll not remove my siege—When I can oblige you—Oh, 'twas sweetly spoken!

She is my own! I have her sure, quite sure!—Now to the tavern, and drink to the purpose. *[Exit.]*

SCENE II.

The Tavern. HAZARD, ACRELESS, LITTLESTOCK, SELLAWAY, and Drawer, discovered.

Haz. More wine.

Acr. Right, noble Hazard; here's to thee.

Haz. Let it come, boy; fill it me steeple high; I am in the vein of mirth, and I ha' cause, as you shall see in due time, gentlemen. Mr. Littlestock, thou art dreaming o' the dice.

Sell. He's melancholy.

Litt. Who, I?

Haz. I'll play the farrier, then, and drench thee for the sullens. A health to all our mistresses; we have had them single, let's shuffle them now together. *[Drinks.]* Come, let us join a little music to our wine, and if his melancholy stands them both, I'll lay all the money in my pocket, which is no small sum, that he has a two-penny cord about him, and will make use of it before to-morrow morning. Come, Tom, I'll give you the gamester's apology, and if these are only qualms of conscience, this song will warm him like a dram.

SONG.

*Ye youths of this town,
Who roam up and down,
To eat and to dress all your aim ;
Be not squeamish or nice
To make friends of the dice,
All the world plays the best of the game.*

*See how each profession
And trade thro' the nation
Will dupe all they can without shame :
Then why should not we
In our turn be as free ?
All the world plays the best of the game.*

*The lawyers of note
Will squabble and quote,
And learnedly plead and declaim ;
Yet all is but trick
The poor client to nick,
For the law plays the best of the game.*

*To gain his base ends,
Each lover pretends
To talk of his darts and his flame,
By which he draws in
The poor maiden to sin,
Who is left with the worst of the game.*

*The prudish coy maid,
With hypocrisy's aid,
To foolish fond man does the same :
When the fool's in the net,
The prude turns coquette,
And her spouse has the worst of the game.*

*The patriots so loud,
Who roar to the crowd,
And mount to the summit of fame !
Their mouths soon will shut,
Then they shuffle and cut,
And at court play the best of the game.*

*The heroes so stout
At home make a rout,
And swear the proud foe they will tame ;
But alter their tones
When they think of their bones,
And for them play the best of the game.*

*Then since the great plan
Is cheat as cheat can,
Pray, think not my notions to blame ;
In country and town,
From courtier to clown,
All the world plays the best of the game.*

Sell. 'Tis joyous, faith !

Haz. I wonder Jack Wilding stays——He's come in the nick.

Enter WILDING.

Wild. Save you, save you, gallants; may a man come i' the rear.

Haz. Give him his garnish.

Wild. Y'are not prisoners for the reckoning, I hope?

Haz. For the reckoning!—Now ye are all together, gentlemen, I'll shew you a wonder. But come not too near; keep out o' the circle. Whatsoever you think on't, this is an hundred pounds—Nay, not so close; these pictures do shew best at distance, gentlemen. You see it—*Presto.* [*Puts it up.*

Wild. Nay, let's see it again.

Haz. Like to your cunning juggler, I ne'er shew my trick but once. You may hear more hereafter. What think you of this, Mr. Acreless, Mr. Littlestock, and Mr. Sellaway?

Acr. We do not believe 'tis gold.

Haz. Perish then in your infidelity.

Wild. Let me but touch it.

Haz. It will endure, take my word for it. Look you, for your satisfactions—No gloves off—you have devices to defalck—Preserve your talons and your talents, till you meet with more convenient gamesters.

Litt. How cam'st by it?

Wild. Thou'dst little or none this morning.

Haz. I have bought it, gentlemen, and you, in a mist,

Shall see what I paid for it. Thou hast not drank yet,
Wilding :

Ne'er fear the reck'ning, man——More wine, you
varlets!

Wild. But hark thee, hark thee, Will, didst win it?

Haz. No ; but I may lose it ere I go to bed.

Dost think't shall musty? What's an hundred
pounds?

Sell. A miracle! But they are ceas'd with me.

Acr. And me too. Come, let's drink.

Wild. No matter how it came, Will: I congratulate

Thy fortune, and will quit thee now with good
News of myself. My coz, I told thee of,
Is wheel'd about: she has took a ring of me.
We kiss'd and talk'd time out of mind.

Haz. I know it:

My almanack says 'tis a good day to woo in;
Confirm'd by Erra Pater, that honest Jew, too.
I'll pledge thee.

Enter Drawer.

Draw. Mr. Hazard, there are two gentlemen below enquire for you; and, Mr. Wilding, this note for you.

Wild. For me!

Haz. What kind of men are they?

Draw. One's somewhat ancient; I heard him call
The other nephew. [Exit.

Wild. Victoria! Victoria! Will, a summons from the island of love—my wife's absent, and Pen and I shall toy away an hour, without fear or molestation.

Haz. Have a care, Jack: I love pleasure as well as thou; but to obtain it at the expence of every virtue, is rather paying too dear for it.

Wild. What, a moralizing gamester! Ha, ha, ha! 'tis envy, Will, attacks thee in the shape of conscience; and was I like the foolish dog in the fable, to catch at the shadow, and drop my tit bit, thou wouldst be the first to snap it up.—But I have not time to laugh at thee—I must away—the wench calls, and I must fly. [Exit.]

Haz. This affair perplexes me—How little do we know of women! had I had fortune enough to have ventured upon marriage, I would have fixed upon this cousin of his, preferable to the whole sex; but the devil is in them, and will peep out one time or other—I don't know why, but I am vexed at this affair—I'll never go to Wilding's house again.

Enter Drawer.

Draw. Mr. Hazard, the gentlemen without are impatient to see you. [Exit.]

Haz. I beg their pardon, I had forgot them. I do caution you, gentlemen, beforehand, to be fair conditioned; one of them, the nephew, is of a fiery constitution, and sensible of any affront; let this character prepare him for you.

Acr. Bring him not hither.

Haz. There is a necessity in it; I would not for a hundred pound but entertain him, now he knows I am here. [Exit.

Sell. Why must we keep company with his disagreeable acquaintance?

Enter HAZARD again, with BARNACLE, his Nephew, and DWINDLE.

Acr. This is old Barnacle.

Lit. And that's his nephew; I have been in his company.

Sell. Is this the youth Hazard prepared us for? How busy they are!

Haz. You could not wish better opportunity. These are all gentlemen of quality. I'll call him cousin first, if it please you, To endear him to their acquaintance

Bar. I'll not be a witness of your passages myself: these will report as much as I desire. Sir, if you be beaten, I am satisfied.

Neph. But, dy'e hear, uncle, are you sure you have made Your bargain wisely? They may cut my throat When you are gone; and what are you the wiser? Dwindle, be you close to me.

Haz. I warrant you, we shall do things with discretion,
If he has but grace to look and talk courageously.

Bar. He may be valiant for aught I know;

Howsoever, this will be a secure way
To have him thought so, if he beat you soundly.

Neph. I do not like the company;
But I have drank wine too, and that's the best on't;
We may quarrel on even terms. Look to't, Dwindle.

Dwin. Here's your safeguard. [*Shewing his stick.*]

Haz. As I am a gentleman—be confident—
I'll wait on you down, sir.

Bar. By no means; let him beat you to purpose,
sir.

Haz. Depend upon me.

Bar. And when he has beat you, sir, I must beg
another favour.

Haz. Oh! command me, sir.

Bar. Courage, you know, not only keeps the men
in awe, but makes the women admire.

Haz. What, must I pimp for your nephew too?

Bar. Lack-a-day! No, no, no; though I'll let
him have his swing, too—but I must marry him forth-
with; and I have one in my eye, that will fit him to
a tittle.

Haz. Who is the happy creature you have destined
for him?

Bar. No less a jewel, I assure you, than your
friend's ward, Penelope; there's money and beauty
enough! Will you put in a word for him?

Haz. Both to the lady, and my friend, and imme-
diately too.

Bar. Only to clear the way a little, Mr. Hazard;

I have a tongue myself, and can use it too, when once it is set a going.

Haz. I have heard of you at the hall.

Bar. Nay, and my nephew can speech it too; ay, and has your repartees too, when he's a little in drink, and he sha'n't want for that.

Haz. You're in the right, Master Barnacle, not to let the hinges rust for want of a little oiling.

Bar. I have another use for you, if you'll introduce us.

Haz. I'll do it.

Bar. But don't forget to be beaten, though.

Haz. Do you suspect my honour?

Bar. I don't, I don't—Well, nephew, mind your hits—Mr. Hazard, yours—I am full of joy!—and, nephew, draw blood, do you hear? [Exit.

Neph. Bye, uncle.

Haz. Come, sir: pray, gentlemen, bid my kinsman welcome; a spark that will demand your friendship.

Sell. His kinsman!—You are welcome.

Acr. He has power to command your welcome.

Litt. If I mistake not, I have had the happiness to have been in your company before now.

Neph. Mine, sir?—D'ye hear, what if I quarrelled [Aside to Hazard.

With him first? 'twill prepare me the better.

Haz. Do as you please; that's without my conditions.

Neph. I'll but give him now and then a touch; I'll close

Well enough, I warrant you.—You been in my Company, sir?

Litt. Yes, and at the tavern.

Neph. I paid the reck'ning then.

Litt. You came into our room——

Neph. Tell me of coming into your room!

I'll come again. You're a superfluous gentleman.

Litt. How's this?

Haz. Let him alone.

Litt. Sir, remember yourself.

Neph. I'll remember what I please, and forget what I remember. Tell me of a reckoning! What is't?

I'll pay't; no man shall make an ass of me,
Farther than I list. I care not a fiddle-stick
For any man's thund'ring; he that affronts
Me, is the son of a worm, and his father's a whore.
I care not a straw, nor a broken point
For you. If any man dare drink to me,
I won't go behind the door to pledge him.

Act. Why here's to you, sir.

Neph. Why, there's to you, sir. Twit me with coming into a room! I could find in my heart to throw a pottle-pot—I name nobody—I will kick any man down stairs, that cannot behave himself like a gentleman. None but a slave would offer to pay a reck'ning before me. Where's the drawer? There's a piece at all adventures. He that is my friend, I

care not a rush ; if any man be my enemy, he is an idle companion, and I honour him with all my heart.

Sell. This is a precious humour. Is he used to these mistakes ?

Litt. Your kinsman gives you privilege.

Neph. I desire no man's privilege : it skills not whether I be kin to any man living.

Haz. Nay, nay, cousin, pray let me persuade you.

Neph. You persuade me! for what acquaintance ?

Mind your business, and speak with your taylor.

Haz. An' you be thus rude——

Neph. Rude, sir! What then, sir?——Hold me,
Dwindle.

Sell. Nay, nay, Will, we bear with him for your sake,

He is your kinsman.

Haz. I am calm again.

Cousin, I am sorry any person here

Hath given you offence.

Neph. Perhaps, sir, you

Have given me offence. I do not fear you.

I have knock'd as round a fellow in my days.

Haz. And may again——

Sell. Be knock'd! A pox upon him; I know not what to make of him.

Haz. Let me speak a word in private, sir.

Neph. I can be as private as you, sir.

Haz. Strike me a box o' th' ear presently. [*Aside.*

Neph. There's my hand on't— [*Strikes him.*

Sell. Nay, nay, gentlemen——

Act. Mr. Hazard——

Neph. Let him call me to account ; the reck'ning's paid.

Come, Dwindle—*Veni, vidi, vici.* Huzza ! [Exit.]

Sell. The fellow's mad. Does he often mistake thus ?

Haz. His courage is a little hard mouthed, it runs away with him now and then ; we must exchange a thrust or two ; after bleeding he'll be cool.

Sell. The youth has a mind to shew himself ; he is just launched into life.

Litt. He'll be soon launch'd out of it again, if he goes on in this way.

Haz. Pr'ythee let's have no more of him ; I shall undertake to cure his fever.—But hark'e, friends, shall we meet at the old place this evening ?

Sell. By all means ; there will be deep play, I hear—my water-mark is but low ; but I'll go as deep as I can. Will not Wilding be of our party too ?

Haz. No, no ; he has a love-matter upon his hands : but should he hear the rattling of the dice, it will bring him from the arms of the finest woman in the kingdom.

Sell. Pooh, pooh ! you carry this too far.

Haz. I know him in this particular better than you ; when he is in the circle of the gaming-table, 'tis all magic, he has not power to move ; and I challenge the devil to bait his hook with a stronger temptation to draw him out of it.

Litt. Besides, among ourselves, what was once

with him occasional pleasure, is now become a necessary occupation. Jack Wilding has made a large gap in the widow's jointure.

Haz. Pshaw! rot your gossipping; don't abuse the generous wine you have been drinking, by mixing such scandal as this with it——stay till you get with your mistresses over their ratafia; and when you're maudlin, open the sluices of slander: however, we'll try the experiment; I'll meet you in the evening, and we'll write to him from the field of battle, and see to which his courage most inclines.

Acr. From love to gaming we'll his heart entice,
But woman will prevail——

Haz.——I say the dice. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III. SCENE I.

Enter WILDING and PENELOPE.

Wilding.

THIS humour does become thee; I knew when
Thou didst consider what was offer'd thee,
Thy sullenness would shake off. Now thou look'st
Fresher than morning; in thy melancholy,
Thy clothes became thee not.

Pen. Y' are i' th' right;
I blam'd my taylor for't; but I find now,
The fault was in my countenance. Would we had

Some music; I could dance now; la, la, la.

[Sings and dances.

Wild. Excellent! what a time shall I have on't?
Zounds, I am all on fire: how she glides!

Thou wot not fail, Pen?

Pen. This night——

Wild. At the hour of twelve.

Pen. But you must be as punctual i' th' conditions,
For my vow's sake; not speak a syllable.

Wild. I'll rather cut my tongue out than offend
thee;

Kissing is no language.

Pen. If it be not too loud;
We must not be seen together, to avoid
Suspicion; I would not for a world my cousin
Should know on't.

Wild. She shall die in ignorance.

Pen. No light, I charge you.

Wild. The devil shall not see us
With his sawcer eyes; "and if he stumble in
"The dark, there sha'not be a stone i' th' chamber
"To strike out fire with's horns." All things shall be
So close, no lightning shall peep in upon us.
Oh, how I long for midnight!

Pen. I have a scruple.

Wild. Oh, by no means, no scruples now.

Pen. When you
Have your desires upon me, you will soon
Grow cold in your affection, and neglect me.

Wild. Why, hang me if I do, I'll love thee ever:

I have cast already to preserve thy honour ;
Thou shalt be married in a fortnight, coz ;
Let me alone to find thee out a husband
Handsome and fit enough ; we will love then too.

Pen. When I am married ?

Wild. Without fear, or wit ;

Cum privilegio, when thou hast a husband ;
Dost think I will forsake thee, Pen ? 'twere pity
O' my life, sweet—I shall love thee the better ;
And I must tell thee——

'Tis my ambition to make a cuckold,
The only pleasure o' th' world ; that imagination
Sweetens the rest, and I do love it mainly, mainly.

Pen. 'Tis double sin.

Wild. 'Tis treble pleasure, wench ;
But we lose time, and may endanger thus
My wife into a jealousy, if she see us.
Farewell, farewell, dear Pen ; at night remember ;
I wo't not lose my sport for half an empire !

Pen. Oh, my fears, your wife's return'd.

Wild. The devil she is ! What shall we do, Pen ?

Pen. I'll retire——but seem you more kind to her,
lest her suspicions should betray us.

Wild. I will do any thing—I have a holiday in my
heart—away, away. [Exit Pen.]

Enter Mrs. WILDING.

Mrs. Wild. What, Mr. Wilding, so soon returned—
with smiles upon your face too—this is unusual ; what
has happened, pray ?

Wild. Why faith, wife, I have been reflecting on my conduct towards thee, and could I but hope you would forget my past behaviour, your life to come should be all sunshine.

Mrs. Wild. Is not this change too sudden to be certain? what has caused it, pray?

Wild. Conscience, conscience, my dear—though vanity and pleasure lulled it for a time, it has now awaked with all its stings, and shewn me all thy virtues, and my errors.

Mrs. Wild. Pray heaven that I am awake, for this is so like a dream.

Wild. Don't you be an infidel, wife, and reject the good now that is offered you. I tell you I'm another man; I am converted—when did you see me before with such pleasure in my face?

Mrs. Wild. Not this many 'a day—Has our cousin Penelope, husband, helped forward this conversion?—If she has, I am greatly obliged to her.

Wild. You are, indeed, wife, much obliged to her; she has done all in her power, I can assure you.

Mrs. Wild. Was not she here with you, at my coming in?

Wild. Yes, yes, she was here—she was indeed—was here with me—I have opened my mind to her—and with much zeal and friendship to you, she has confirmed me in my new faith.

Mrs. Wild. How much I am bound to her!

Wild. You are, indeed, wife: you have not a better friend in the world, I can tell you that—Now, what do you want?

Enter Page.

Page. Some gentlemen are waiting for you at the old place, and desire your company.

Mrs. Wild. You may tell them, that your master has forsaken his old haunts; he has seen the folly of them, and retires— *[Servant going.*

Wild. Hold, hold, wife—such a message as this will make us the talk of the town; *I won't be too particular*; I will steal myself gently from my friends and pleasures, and rather wean, than tear myself from them— Let them know I will attend them. *[Exit Servant.*

Mrs. Wild. As you please—Farewell, my penitent.

Wild. Farewell, my prudence—Had not this message come luckily to my assistance, my hypocrisy had been out of breath, and the devil had peeped out in spite of all the pains I had taken to conceal it. *[Aside.*
[Exit Wilding.

Enter PENELOPE.

Pen. How have I enjoyed his confusion! Faith, cousin, you acted it bravely.

Mrs. Wild. I am sorry that I am forced to dissemble.

Pen. The best of us can, and must, upon proper occasions.

Mrs. Wild. Thou dost hit my instructions excellently.

Pen. I have made work for somebody—you have

put me upon a desperate service ; if you do not relieve me, I am finely served.

Mrs. Wild. All has succeeded to my wish ; thy place I will supply to-night ; if he observe all the conditions, I may deceive my husband into kindness, and we both live to reward thee better——Oh, dear coz, take heed, by my example, upon whom thou placest thy affections.

Pen. Indeed, my dear, you take this too deeply ; my life for it, but we shall reclaim him at last.

Mrs. Wild. That I almost despair of ; and not so much from his total disregard of me, and his pursuit of other women, as from his uncontrollable passion for gaming.

Pen. He has understanding with all his frailties : and when those violent, irregular inclinations have had their scope, they must return to you.

Mrs. Wild. The passion of gaming, my dear, is not to be conquered even by the best understandings ; it is an absolute whirlpool ; wit, sense, love, friendship, and every virtue, are merely leaves and straws, that float upon the surface of the tide ; which, as they approach this gulf, are all drawn in, and sink to the bottom, as if they had never been.

Enter HAZARD.

Pen. Master Hazard——

Haz. Save you, Mrs. Wilding.

Mrs. Wild. You are welcome, sir.

Pen. He is a handsome gentleman.

[Aside.]

Haz. Gone abroad?

Mrs. Wild. This moment left us, and, as I thought, to meet you, and his other sober friends.

Haz. I called upon him to attend him.

Mrs. Wild. The servant shall overtake him, and bring him back to you.

Haz. 'Tis too much trouble.

Mrs. Wild. What! for the best friend of the best of husbands! you wrong me, sir. [*Exit Mrs. Wild.*]

Haz. Thou art the best of women, I am sure—Ha! this is the very gentlewoman! in good time—Now for my promise to old Barnacle—I'll accost her—What a pity it is this wench should be a morsel for that glutton Wilding? [*Aside.*]

Pen. What a pity it is this fellow should be a gamester, and companion of my modest guardian?—How he eyes me! [*Aside.*]

Haz. Your name is Penelope, I take it, lady?

Pen. If you take it, I hope you will give it me again.

Haz. What again?

Pen. My name.

Haz. Would not you change it, if you could?

Pen. For the better, surely.

Haz. Wilt thou dispose of thyself?

Pen. Can you tell me of any honest man whom I may trust myself with?

Haz. I'll tell thee a hundred.

Pen. Take heed what you say, sir,—a hundred honest men! why, if there were so many in the city,

'twere enough to forfeit their charter—but, perhaps, you live in the suburbs.

Haz. This wench will jeer me.

[*Aside.*

Pen. I hope you are not one, sir.

Haz. One of what?

Pen. One of those honest men you talked of so, to whom a maiden might intrust herself?

Haz. You have hit me, lady; come, I'll give thee counsel; and more, I'll help thee to a chapman too.

Pen. Alas! no chapmen now-a-days. Gentlemen are such strange creatures, "so infinitely cold, and "so void of every passion," that a handsome woman cannot reach their pity—Why have you this "so "strange" antipathy to us? To what end will gentlemen come, if this frost holds?

Haz. You are witty; but I suppose you have no cause of such complaint—though some men may want warmth, there is no general winter; and if I guess aright, you'll never be frost-nipt, lady—at least you may prevent it.

Pen. Are you acquainted with any knight-errants, who would succour a distress'd damsel?

Haz. Yes, I know of one—ay, and a bold one too, that dares adventure with you; nay, will take you for better and for worse.

Pen. And is he young too?

Haz. Oh, very young.

Pen. And wise?

Haz. Not over wise.

Pen. Yourself, belike.

Haz. Indeed, not over wise, I must confess; nor yet so witless, lady.

Pen. Who is the hero? Is he of your school? Is it from you that he has learned to travel the fashionable road? Can he drink, dice, roar, rake and royster? scour the streets a-nights, draw forth his valour, which the bottle gives him, upon the feeble watch, *but flies when danger comes?* or is he one of those delicate superfine thin-spun animals, who vegetate indeed, but don't live; who, having refined away all taste and sensibility, stalk about at public places, with their eyes half shut and their mouths open, among a circle of the finest women, without hearing, seeing, tasting, understanding, or feeling any thing?

Haz. Hold, hold: you'll never get a husband, lady, if thus you let your tongue outrun your wit.

Pen. Is he to get then? I thought that he was ready caught, and you had brought him in a cage.

Haz. Will you accept him?

Pen. What in a poke? unseen, untry'd? Has the youth no name?

Haz. Ay, and a weighty one—'tis Barnacle; young, rich and handsome.

Pen. Was this at his entreaty, or your own kind charity?

Haz. Look'e, lady, lose not time in questions—husbands are not so plenty—Will you have him?

Pen. I thank you for your goodness, sir, and would advise you, if you have more of these commodities,

to take them to another market—I am supplied already—and so your servant. [Exit.

Haz. Gad-a-mercy! thou art a girl of spirit; supplied already? What can she mean?—not Wilding sure!—Impossible!—There is something about her that bespeaks her honest—I know not what to make of her—she may be a tumbler for all this.

Enter Page.

Page. My master, sir, will be at the appointment as soon as possible—he must call at his banker's first, and then he'll attend you. [Exit.

Haz. 'Tis well. This Penelope has touched me strangely—She is certainly—but what's that to me? I'll go, and drown thought at the gaming-table. [Exit.

SCENE II.

A Room in a Tavern. Enter SELLAWAY and Box-Keeper.

Sell. Was my message delivered to Wilding?

Box. Yes, sir; he will certainly attend you.

Sell. What gamesters have you within?

Box. The old set, sir.

Sell. What, no strangers?

Box. A country gentleman or two.

Sell. Will they make sport, think'st thou?

Box. The black-legs are about them: if they are

full of feathers (as I believe they are) we shall have good picking.

Sell. Well, do you set them a-going, and I'll be among 'em presently. *[Exit Box-Keeper.]*

Enter HAZARD.

You are late, Hazard.

Haz. I could not come sooner; but don't you lose time—I must write a note, and will be with you at the table presently. *[Exit Sell.]*

What is the meaning, I can't tell; but it hurts me to think that this foolish girl should so easily hearken to the lewd call of this fellow Wilding—this abandon'd, unfeeling fellow! Perhaps, 'tis his vanity—I did not perceive, 'till she was in danger, that the agreeable jade had given me any concern. What is the reason, that to be eminently vicious is the readiest road to a woman's heart; nay, even to the best of 'em? But I'll rattle this nonsense out of my head; I have a hundred in my pocket, and the dice are set a dancing. I'll strike up among 'em, and drown reflection——What, Wilding!

Enter WILDING.

Wild. Yes, you rogue, 'tis Wilding; the happy, gay, rapturous Wilding! Wish me joy, joy, man!

Haz. What, is your wife dead?

Wild. No, but my mistress is kind, which is very near as good a thing.

Haz. Thou art not mad?

Wild. No, no ; but I swell with imagination,
Like a tall ship bound for the fortunate islands ;
Top and top-gallant, my flags, and my figaries
Upon me, with a lusty gale of wind,
Able to rend my sails ; I shall o'er-run
And sink thy little bark of understanding,
In my career ; I fly before the wind, boy.

Haz. Pray Heaven rather
You do not spring a leak, and forfeit your
Ballast, my confident man of war ; I
Have known as stout a ship been cast away
In sight o' th' harbour.

Wild. The wench, the wench, boy !

Haz. The vessel you have been chasing——

Wild. Has struck sail ;
Is come in ; and cries, Aboard, my new lord of
The Mediterranean. We are agreed :
This is the precious night, Will ; twelve the hour,
That I must take possession of all, all,
You rogue you !

Haz. Pr'ythee descend from thy raptures, for the
gamesters are now coming, and we lose time.

Wild. The house fills a-pace. What are these, ha ?

Haz. Young Barnacle, and the vinegar-bottle his
man ; he has business of much import with you ; he
would be your rival with Penelope.

Wild. And may, if he pleases, when I have made
her fit for him. If I have the first glass, he shall
take the rest of the bottle, and welcome. But are
you in earnest ?

Haz. Pr'ythee talk to him, and hear his overtures—He may be worth your listening to. I'll to the table—if I win, I shall have no cause to repent my bargain with him ; if I lose, by these hilts I'll make him the cause, and beat him. Pr'ythee keep him from me a few minutes, and then I'll relieve thee.

Wild. But how shall I do it ?

Haz. Tell him any whimsical tale ; he is so absurd, that it will go glibly down.

Wild. I'll try his swallow then.

Haz. Then luck with a hundred pieces ! [Exit.

Wild. I must get a fool for her, and if this will bite, he is already got to my hands.

[Takes a news-paper out of his pocket.

Enter Nephew and DWINDLE.

Neph. Dwindle, that gentleman there is the guardian to the lady that I am to be in love with. Should not I shew away to him, and astonish him with a little learning, eh, Dwindle ?

Dwin. Do, sir ; let off a little Greek at him, and I warrant he'll be proud to call you cousin.

Neph. I am a little out of Greek at present, Dwindle ; but for Latin, history, and philosophy—What is he reading, Dwindle ?

Dwin. Ask him, sir.

Neph. *Quem librum legis, domine ?*

Wild. Have you any commands with me, sir ?

Neph. Pray, sir, what news is abroad these bad times ?

Wild. Bad times, sir ! when were we so great, so good, or so magnanimous ? our ancestors were children to us ; our exploits crowd so thick upon us, that we are obliged to send for the largest pyramid that can be got in Egypt to write 'em down upon, for the benefit of posterity—and I am now calculating what it will cost to bring it over.

Neph. A handsome penny, I warrant you. He's upon his fun, Dwindle, but I'll humour him. Where is the pyramid to be put, sir ?

Wild. Upon Dover Cliff, sir ; and the side facing the French coast is to be wrote in phosphorus, which will be read in the dark winter nights as far as Paris, with the same ease that you see what o'clock it is by St. Paul's at noon day.

Neph. Hark'e, Dwindle, this is very curious.

Dwin. Too curious to be true.

Neph. Have you any more news, sir ? if you have, pray impart—I have a great appetite for news—vouchsafe me another slice.

Wild. A meal if you please—be there no more gentlemen to hear ? 'Tis extraordinary fine news, in black and white, from *terra incognita*.

Neph. *Terra incognita* ! What, has it no name ?

Wild. It had, sir, but it is ashamed of it.

Neph. But what are they doing there ?

Wild. Nothing at all—'tis inhabited by a nation without heads.

Neph. Without heads ! Where are their eyes then ?

Wild. They lost them first, sir, then their heads ;

and they say the distemper, if not stopped, will spread over the rest of their body.

Neph. O wonderful ! a gentleman would not choose to travel there. How can they know one another without their heads, sir ?

Wild. They don't ; they are so changed, sir, they are neither known by themselves or other people ; having no heads, sir, they are continually playing at blindman's buff for the diversion of their neighbours.

Neph. *Monstrum ! horrendum ! informe ! ingens ! cui lumen ademptum*—ha, ha, ha ! Are there no politicians there ?

Wild. Did not I tell you it was a nation without heads & all, all politicians.

Neph. *Qui capit ille facit.* I know your meaning ; your jest is not thrown away upon me.

“ *Wild.* Ha, ha ! extremely good ; apt and witty.”

Dwin. Now is your time—to him, sir.

Neph. I should be proud, sir, to have some nearer connections with a gentleman of your learning, and profound erudition.

Wild. I should be happy to know how, sir, and proud to be your friend and servant, in the true sense of the words.

Neph. Dwindle, my affairs are in a fine way. In every sense, I am your humble servant *in secula seculorum*. You must know, sir——

Wild. I'll know it by and by, if you please, for we are interrupted ; let us sport away a few pounds at

the table, and then I'll go to the tavern and be at your service *in secula seculorum*. [Exit.

Neph. Come along, Dwindle; if my fortune goes on as swimmingly as she has begun, I shall make a rare night on't. If I get my mistress, and fill my pockets, we'll be as drunk as lords. Come along, Dwindle. [Exeunt.

SCENE III.

Draws, and discovers the Gaming-table. Gamesters at Play; after some Time, and calling different Mains, enter LITTLESTOCK and ACRELESS.

Litt. A curse upon those reeling dice! that last in and in

Was out of way ten pieces. Canst lend me any Money? How have the dice dealt with thee?

Acr. Lost, lost—I defy thee. If my luck recover not,

I must be sober to-morrow. Damn'd, damn'd fortune!

Litt. Oh, for a hundred, and all made now,

Enter SELLAWAY.

Sell. Yonder's Hazard wins tyrannically, without Mercy: he came in but with a hundred pieces.

Litt. I'll get a fancy presently.

Acr. And how thrive the bones with his lordship?

Sell. His lordship's bones are not well set ; they are maliciously bent against him ; they will run him quite out of all.

Box-keeper calls again several Mains ; and after some warm Play, and much Money is won and lost, enter Nephew and DWINDLE.

Neph. More money ! Dwindle, call my uncle. I must have it for my honour : two hundred pieces more will serve my turn : in the mean time, I will play away, for want of cash, some superfluous things about me.

Dwin. By that time you are come to your shirt, I shall be with you.

Sell. He's blown up too.

[*Exit Dwin.*]

Enter HAZARD.

Haz. So, so, the dice in two or three such nights will be out of my debt ; and I may live to be a landlord again.

Sell. You are fortune's minion, Hazard.

Haz. You would seem to be no fool, because she dotes not

Upon you. Gentlemen, I must take my chance ; 'twas A lucky hundred pound ! Jack Wilding !

Enter WILDING, gnawing a Box.

What, eating the boxes ?

Wild. Chewing the cud a little ; I have lost all my money, Will ;

Thou hast made a fortunate night on't : wo't play
No more ?

Haz. 'Tis the first time I had the grace
To give off a winner—I would not tempt the dice.

Wild. What hast won ?

Haz. You do not hear me complain :
I have not been so warm these ten weeks.

Enter ACRELESS.

Wild. 'Tis frost in my pockets.

Acre. Master Hazard, I was afraid you had been
gone ; there's a fresh gamester come in, with his
pockets full of gold : he dazzles the gamesters, and
no man has stock to play with him.

Wild. The devil ! What is he ?

Acre. A merchant he seems ; he may be worth
your return.

Haz. Not for the exchange to-night, I am resolved.

Wild. Temptation ! now have I an infinite itch to
this merchant's pieces.

Haz. Thou wo't venture again then ?

Wild. I would if I could—but what do I forget ?
the wench, the fairy at home expects me.

Haz. I had forgot too : you wo' not play now ?

Wild. 'Tis now upon the time. [*Looking at his watch.*
Curs'd misfortune !

Haz. You will not stay then ?

Wild. Hum—I ha' lost my money, and may re-
cover a pretty wench. Which hand ? This wanton-
ness ; this covetousness ; money is the heavier. Will,

dost hear? I'll requite thy courtesy—lend me two hundred pounds to attack the merchant, and I will give thee good interest, and the best security.

Haz. What the dice and your old luck, Jack?

Wild. No, damn the dice—I will give it thee upon Pen's fortune; she is so loving that I can command her, and hers.

Haz. No matter for her fortune, I'll be contented with less: pay me with the girl herself.

Wild. How do you mean?

Haz. I'll be contented with her personal security.

Wild. Pr'ythee, be plain; I am in haste, and every rattle of the dice makes my heart beat to be at the merchant. What wouldst have? I'll agree to any thing, every thing—

Haz. The wench at home expects you.

Wild. Well—

Haz. Let me supply thy place.

Wild. Ha!

Haz. And here are the two hundred pieces.

Wild. What! no—no—

Haz. Nay, then your servant. [Going.

Wild. Stay, Will—Now, now the devil is at work with me—he has thrown out two baits, and I know not which to strike at.

Haz. I must take my money home—Yours, Jack, yours— [Going.

Wild. Stay, stay, thou shalt, Will—I love thee for thy generosity—Gold is a real 'good, woman an imaginary one—Besides, a losing gamester will make

but a cool lover ; thou art warmed with success, and deservest her—She will be mine another time. Thou shalt have her.

Haz. Shall I ?

Wild. Yes.

Haz. Done.

Wild. And done.

Haz. There are bills for your money.

Wild. To-morrow you'll thank me for't. Be secret, she'll never know thee, for our conditions are to [*Whispers him.*] neither light, nor—and she must need conceive 'tis I. Here's my key—It conducts you up the back way into the house—The servants are in bed, the first door on the right hand in the gallery leads to her apartment.

Haz. Are you in earnest ?

Wild. Have you wit to apprehend the courtesy ?
Let me alone ; the wench and I shall meet
Hereafter, and be merry : take my key—
The merchant's money cools : away ; be wise,
And keep conditions : I must to the gamester ;
Farewell ; remember not to speak a word.

Haz. What, kiss and tell ; O, fie for shame.

Wild. Success to thee, Will.

Haz. And to thee, Jack. [*Exeunt severally.*]

Enter Mrs. WILDING and PENELOPE, with Candles.

Pen. I wish it may answer your purpose.

Mrs. Wild. I cannot lose any thing by the trial ; the scheme is an innocent one, and if I can but rouse

my husband a little from his lethargy to the least sense of shame, who knows what may happen?

Pen. Hark!—are you sure you heard nothing?

Mrs. Wild. Nothing but your maid going to bed.

Pen. Not come yet!—It is past the time too—'Tis very strange.

Mrs. Wild. Indeed, my dear Pen, this lover of yours is most terribly unpolite.

Pen. My vanity is a little mortified at it, I must confess——A fine gallant, indeed!

Mrs. Wild. You see, child, this gaming! it destroys every other passion, good or bad—And what hopes, think you, have I to draw him from the spell, when even you, Penelope, with all your charms, cannot break the enchantment?

Pen. Who knows but there may be some better way to account for his stay? Why may not his conscience and his reason together have debated this matter a little seriously, and tho' they have been tolerably pliant heretofore, may grow resty at a crime of this nature.

Mrs. Wild. Come, come, let us not flatter ourselves too far: his reason and conscience are at present very good friends with his passions, and attend him with great alacrity in all his parties of pleasure.

Pen. Hark! I am sure I hear him.

Mrs. Wild. Indeed you are mistaken; 'tis your pride now that fancies so——Don't imagine that he'll cast a single thought upon you, while he has a single guinea in his pocket.

Pen. Ay, ay, that's your jealousy, cousin——But I know——Upon my word I hear him——Indeed I do——Hark! he's now unlocking the door.

Mrs. Wild. No, no—Hush—You are in the right—I hear my thief—he's coming the back way——Take the candles into your chamber, and be ready to come in at the signal. Bless me, how frightened I am!

Pen. Are you, my dear? Then do you take my part, and I'll take yours.

Mrs. Wild. Get you gone, you fool; I am not in a condition to trifle. I have more at stake than you imagine. [*Exit Penelope with candles.*] Now for it. I wish it was over. [*Sighs and retires.*]

Enter HAZARD.

Haz. I thought I never should have got hither.—But where I am I can neither feel nor tell. And, now I am here, I could almost wish myself back again. I have some qualms about this business; and were I not afraid of being laughed at, I would certainly return. But, thanks to the spirit of the times, gentlemen are much less afraid of being profligate than ridiculous. [*Feeling about.*]

Mrs. Wild. He has certainly been drinking, by his muttering so to himself. Now to catch my spark—Hem, hem!

Haz. There she is, and all my fears are fled——Hem, hem! [*They approach, and when they meet he offers to kiss her.*]

Mrs. Wild. How violent he is! I have not had such a favour from him these two years. [*Aside.*]

Haz. How modest we are. [*She stamps.*]

Enter PENELOPE, with lights.

What's the matter?—Ha! a light——

Who have we got here? We are discover'd.

Mrs. Wild. Discover'd—ha! [*Screams.*] Who are you?

Pen. What's the matter here?

Haz. Mrs. Wilding!

Mrs. Wild. Mr. Hazard!

Pen. Your servant, good folks! [*Curtsyng.*] What, my good cousin and Mr. Hazard at hide and seek in the gallery, in my guardian's absence. You are a most generous gentleman indeed! you are for providing every way, I see, for distressed ladies.

Mrs. Wild. For Heaven's sake, Mr. Hazard, how got you here?

Haz. Upon my soul, madam, I scarce can tell you.

Mrs. Wild. You have squeezed my fingers most unmercifully.

Pen. So, so!

Haz. Upon my soul, madam, it was all a mistake. My errand at present was not with you, but with that lady.

Pen. With me! What business, pray? To pinch my fingers?

Haz. Here are my credentials. [*Shews a key.*] I was only to act by deputation from a certain friend of mine.

Pen. Which I suppose is a certain good guardian of mine.

Mrs. Wild. And who is most certainly my virtuous husband.

Haz. I am so astonished, I hardly know whether I am awake.

Pen. To be sure!—You unlock people's doors, get into their houses, seize upon their wives, and all in your sleep.

Haz. Ladies, though I may, perhaps, suffer in your opinions by my silence, yet I could wish, for my friend's sake, my own, and yours, that you would give me your pardon, and peaceably send me about my business; for indeed I am most sincerely ashamed and sorry.

Pen. Poor modest gentleman! had a housebreaker been caught in the fact, he would have made just the same apology. But no pardon from me, without a free and full confession.

Mrs. Wild. I can say nothing, Mr. Hazard, in your justification; but if you have a mind to make all the amends in your power, you will join with me in a plot I have just now thought of; for though Mr. Wilding may not have love enough to be jealous of me, I know he has too much pride to be easy, if he thought I was false to him; and what must he feel when he believes me innocently so, and knows himself to be the cause of it?

Pen. I adore you, my dear Mrs. Wilding, for the thought. I long to be revenged of him for his base design upon me; and, now you have him in your

power, if you don't torment him thoroughly, I'll never forgive you as long as I live.

Mrs. Wild. Let me alone for that. Mr. Hazard has only to behave as if he had succeeded in his design upon you. But let us confer notes together below stairs.

Haz. Ladies, you shall command my life, and my best services.

Pen. Best and worst, they are always ready, I'll say t'at for Mr. Hazard.

Haz. Indeed, lady, you know but half of me.

Pen. The worst half.

Haz. I fear so ; but let me assure you both, that with all my frailties, I am much happier in forwarding this scheme of virtue, than I should have been in the success of my folly.

Pen. Do you believe him ?

Mrs. Wild. I am confident of it. Don't mind her, Mr. Hazard, but follow me.

Pen. Mr. Hazard !

Haz. Madam !

Pen. The devil was sick, the devil a monk would be ;

The devil was well ; the devil a monk was he.

[*Excunt.*]

ACT IV. SCENE I.

WILDING's House. Enter Mrs. WILDING and
BARNACLE.

Barnacle.

BUT has not Master Hazard in no wise opened his business to you, lady, your husband, or your fair cousin ? I had his promise for it.

Mrs. Wild. What business, good sir ? I pray you, speak. — This interruption is unfortunate. [*Aside.*

Bar. Thus, then ; I have, lady, a longing, as it were, to be more nearly connected with your family. You must needs know what I would say.

Mrs. Wild. Indeed I am no scholar, and this is all Greek to me.

Bar. My nephew understands Greek, lady ; ay, and Latin too ; and geography, and poetry, and philosophy ; and is withal as valiant——

Mrs. Wild. 'Tis the peculiar blessing of the times ; our young men are so learned and brave, and our old ones so wise and virtuous, that we are the astonishment of the whole world. 'Tis the golden age, sir. But your business.

Bar. Vouchsafe me, lady, one plain answer to an honest question.—Has your fair kinswoman, the beautiful Penelope, yet transferred her affections to any one happy mortal ?

Mrs. Wild. If she had not, would Mr. Barnacle become a purchaser?

Bar. Me, madam? No, no no! Alas, Alas! my dancing days are over!—But for my nephew—Oh, that nephew of mine! You have seen him, and heard of him, surely, have you not, madam?

Mrs. Wild. My mind, of late, Mr. Barnacle, has had little attention, but to its own troubles.

Bar. Alack, alack, I know it well! You are much discoursed of, and pitied by the world, and I'll be bold to say, if there be any man that troubles you, or any that you would have talked withal, let him be who he will, I'll rid you of that care. He that shall offer to disturb you but in a thought, do you mark me, madam? I'll take an order with him——

Mrs. Wild. What will you do, sir?

Bar. Don't mistake me; I'll do nothing——But I'll send my nephew. He shall work him, and jerk him, I warrant you. You don't know how my nephew is improved since he came from the university: he is a perfect knight-errant, the very St. George for England!—Why, madam, he has had a pluck at the very flower of chivalry, ay, and cropped it too; the very Donzel del Phebo of the time; and all the roaring blades lower their topsails to him. I'll say no more—Name but the man whom you but frown upon, and I'll send my nephew to him.

Mrs. Wild. I thank you, sir; I have no enemy to exercise his prowess upon; my discontents are known

to flow from a nearer person—I am ashamed to say——

Bar. Your husband—Say but the word, and I'll send my nephew to him; and were he ten husbands he should mollify him. Don't spare him. Had you but seen him baffle a squire this morning!

Mrs. Wild. These praises of your nephew, Mr. Barnacle, are thrown away upon me; 'tis my cousin must be warmed with them; and here she comes—So I shall leave your eloquence to present the flower of chivalry to her, which I think would be an ornament to the fairest bosom in the kingdom.

Bar. Madam, you do my nephew honour; and when you are in the humour to have any man beaten, either in your own family or in the kingdom—I'll send my nephew to him.

Enter PENELOPE.

Mrs. Wild. Dear Pen, dispatch this old fool as fast as you can, and in the mean time I'll dispatch my page to fetch my wandering turtle home. [Exit.

Bar. Fair lady, I am your servant. [Bows.

Pen. Good sir, I am yours. [Curtseys.

Bar. I fear my visit may offend.

Pen. I am but ill at ease, indeed, sir, and most unfit for company.

Bar. What, so young and melancholy! Oh, 'tis a pity!

Pen. It is indeed, and yet I am melancholy.

Bar. And for what, fair lady?

Pen. For a gentleman.—What would you have a fair lady melancholy for?

Bar. I'll send my nephew to him——

Pen. To bring him to me?

Bar. Ay, bring him, and swing him, if you desire it. You can make him do any thing, madam. Say you but the word, and he'll take the Great Turk by the whiskers——Oh, my nephew's a pretty fellow!—Don't you know him, madam?

Pen. Not I, sir.

Bar. Not know my nephew! I'll send him to you.

Pen. What to do, sir?

Bar. He shall do any thing. The town's afraid of him.

Pen. Oh, pray, keep him from me then!

Bar. He'll hurt no woman. But for the men——

Pen. Can he make 'em better, sir? 'If he could, we should be much obliged to him.

Bar. And he shall, lady.

Pen. Then let it be quickly; for I'll stay till they are mended, before I think of a husband.

Bar. What think you, sweet lady, of the hero himself?

Pen. My thoughts must not run after such costly fruit.

Bar. My nephew is dying for you.

Pen. Poor young man!—But if we were both dying, my guardian would see us at our last gaspings before he'd consent.

Bar. Would he? Then my nephew shall talk to him. Let him alone to get the consent.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Your nephew, sir, is below, and begs to be admitted to the idol of his affections.

Pen. Shew the gentleman up. [*Exit Servant.*]

Bar. Idol of his affections! There's an expression for you.—My nephew is a fine scholar and a great hero. Here he is. I shall leave you together. Your servant, madam.

Enter Nephew and DWINDLE.

To her, nephew; now is your time. I have cleared the way; she's your own; you'll have a fine reception. I am glad to see you are half drunk—Be bold and conquer. [*Exit.*]

Neph. Ne'er fear me, uncle; when I am rocky, I defy any woman in Christendom. I have not been in bed to-night. When I am bosky, I never flinch.

Dwin. To her, to her, sir.

Neph. Shall I attack her with a little learning, Dwindle? If I could but put her into confusion, the town's my own.

Dwin. Give her a broadside then.

Neph. I had rather beat the watch than talk to her. My courage fails me, Dwindle.

Pen. I must send this fool a packing. [*Aside.*]—Do you trust yourself abroad, sir, without your un-

cle? You are very young, and there are a great many coaches and carts in this metropolis.

Neph. Coaches and carts, Dwindle! I am dumb,
et vox faucibus hæsit.

Dwin. Give her one fire first.

Neph. I had rather go back again, Dwindle.

[*Going.*

Dwin. What, turn your back upon the enemy!

Neph. I can't face her, *per deos immortales.*

Pen. If you have any matter to communicate, let me beg to know it immediately, for I'm in haste.

Neph. I had much matter to communicate, but your coaches and carts have drove it quite out of my head.

Pen. Poor gentleman! When you have recovered your senses, and the use of your tongue, return to me again, and I shall be at your service; in the mean time, I would recommend a gentle nap to you; and I'll pay a visit to my monkey: and so, sir, your servant.

[*Exit.*

Neph. This is a fine reception, truly, Dwindle!

Dwin. So, so, sir.

Neph. I am in a damn'd passion, Dwindle. I'll go and kick her monkey.

Dwin. Leave that to me, sir, and I'll do his business.

Neph. But this must not pass so. What does my uncle mean, and Mr. Wilding mean, by sending me here to be laughed at? If I meet 'em, wo betide 'em.

I am so full, that unless I have some vent I shall burst. Don't speak to me, Dwindle, or I shall certainly fall upon you. Oh, for a man, woman, or child, now!—I must beat something. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

The Street. Enter HAZARD and WILDING.

Wild. How now, Will! Thou look'st desperately this morning. Didst sleep well to-night?

Haz. Do not enquire, but curse yourself till noon. I am charitable, I do not bid thee hang thyself; and yet I have cause to thank thee. I would not have lost the turn for all the money I won last night—Such a delicious theft!

Wild. I think so.

Haz. I found it so, and dare make my affidavit.

Wild. Thou didst not see her?

Haz. Nor speak to her. To what purpose?

Wild. Now do I
Grow melancholy.

Haz. If thou dost envy me,
There is some reason for't; thou dost imagine
I have had pleasure in my days; but never,
Never so sweet a skirmish! Not a kiss,
But had Elysium in't.

Wild. I was a rascal.

Haz. If thou didst know but half so much as I,

Or couldst imagine it, thou wouldst acknowledge
Thyself worse than a rascal on record.

Wild. Hold your tongue.

Haz. I have not words t' express, how soft, how
bounteous,

How every thing a man with full desires
Could wish a lady.

Wild. Pr'ythee, be quiet. But tell me, Will—

Haz. Don't question me farther.

It is too much happiness to remember :
I am sorry I have said so much.

Wild. Was I not curs'd,
To lose my money and such delicate sport ?

Haz. But that I love thee well, shouldst ne'er
enjoy her.

Wild. Why ?

Haz. I would almost cut thy throat.

Wild. You would not.

Haz. But take her ; and if thou part'st with her
one night more for less than both the Indies, thou'lt
lose by her. She has paid me for my service ; I ask
nothing else.

Wild. If she be such a precious morsel, Will,
I think you may be satisfied.

Haz. Take heed,
And understand thyself a little better.
I think you may be satisfied—With what ?
A handsome wench ! 'Tis heresy ; recant it ;
I never shall be satisfied.

Wild. You do not purpose
A new encounter.

Haz. For thy sake,
'Tis possible I may not: I would have
My game kept for me. What I have done, faith,
Was upon your entreaty; if you have
The like occasion hereafter, I
Should have a hard heart to deny thee, Jack.

Wild. Thou hast fir'd my blood!—That I could
call back time,
To be possess'd of what my indiscretion
Gave up to thy enjoying! But I am comforted,
She thinks 'twas I; and we hereafter may
Be free in our delights—Now, sir, the news
With you?

Enter Page.

Page. My mistress did command my diligence
To find you out, and pray you come to speak with
her.

Wild. When I am at leisure.

Page. 'Tis of consequence.

Wild. Is Penelope with her?

Page. Not when she sent me forth.
Shall I tell my mistress you will come to her?

Wild. How officious you are for your mistress, sir-
rah!

What, said she I came not home all night?

Page. Nothing to me. But my eyes ne'er beheld
her look so pleasantly.

Wild. Well, well, say I'll come. [Exit Page.

Haz. Now, farewell, Jack. I need not urge your secrecy touching your mistress—I must laugh at thee, and heartily, ha, ha, ha!—So, farewell, farewell, Jack, ha, ha, ha! [Exit.

Wild. To say the truth, I have shewed myself a coxcomb. A pox o' play, that made me double loser!—For aught I know, she may never admit me to such a turn again—and then I ha' punished myself ingeniously—Oh, fool, fool, fool! [Exit.

SCENE III.

WILDING's House. Enter Mrs. WILDING, and PENELOPE.

Mrs. Wild. Is he coming, say'st thou?

Pen. I saw him turn at the corner of the square.

Mrs. Wild. Is he alone?

Pen. Alone, and seems disordered: with his eyes upon the ground, and his arms folded thus, he walks by starts, and shews all is not right within.

Mrs. Wild. Now comes the trial—Hark! I hear him. You must away. Now for it. [Exit Pen.

Enter WILDING.

So, my good penitent man, I find your conscience was sincere; you have at last taken a farewell to your follies, but such dear friends you were, you took up all the night in parting.

Wild. I have bid farewell to them for ever. It was the last effort of expiring passion; but 'tis gone, and now I'm a new man—Heigho! [Sighs.]

Mrs. Wild. Why do you sigh, husband?
How d'ye, sweetheart? [Smiling.]

Wild. Well, but a little melancholy.
You look more sprightly, wife; something has pleas'd you.

Mrs. Wild. It has indeed; and if it be no stain To modesty, I would enquire how you Sped the last night.

Wild. I lost my money.

Mrs. Wild. I don't mean that. [Smiling.]

Wild. Don't mean that?—I am not betray'd, I hope!

What do you mean?

Mrs. Wild. Y'are a fine gentleman!

Wild. 'Tis so; could she not keep her own counsel? [Aside.]

Mrs. Wild. And have behav'd yourself most wittily, And I may say most wrongfully: this will Be much for your honour, when 'tis known.

Wild. What will be known?

Mrs. Wild. Do you not blush? Oh, fie!
Is there no modesty in man?

Wild. Riddle my riddle my re—Pox of your ambiguities: what would you have?—I would not yet seem conscious.

Mrs. Wild. 'Tis time then to be plain; it was a wonder

I could be so long silent : did you like
Your last night's lodging ?

Wild. Very, very well ;

I went not to bed all night.

Mrs. Wild. Not to bed all night !—Think again,
my dear—your mem'ry may fail you.

Wild. What do you mean ?—I say I have not been
in bed to-night ; and had you any eyes but jealous
ones, you'd see by mine I have not slept to-night.

Mrs. Wild. Look at me, husband.

Wild. So I do—there ! there ! there !—What
mummery's this ?

Mrs. Wild. Now tell me—do you feel no small
compunction at thus looking in my injured face ?

Wild. A pox upon these stale expostulations ; must
I ever be dinned with them ? and can't my refor-
mation work a change in you ?—thou art the strangest
woman——

Mrs. Wild. Soft, soft, my good husband—Did not
you meet Penelope last night ?

Wild. No ; I met no Penelope last night.

Mrs. Wild. And were you not to meet her ?—
Speak, my dear.

Wild. Pr'ythee, let me alone, my head aches.

Mrs. Wild. No, no, 'tis my head that aches—Did
you not pass the night, the live-long night, in wan-
ton, stolen embraces.

Wild. Refuse me if I did.

Mrs. Wild. You did not lie with Mrs. Penelope,
my kinswoman ?

Wild. Cuckold me, if I did. I swear——

Mrs. Wild. Come, come, don't swear—but 'twas no fault of yours, no fault, no virtue—but this is no time to expostulate these actions—in brief, know 'twas my plot.
[Smiling.]

Wild. What plot?

Mrs. Wild. Yes, yes, my plot, my dear. [Smiling.]

Wild. My plot, my dear! what do you smirk and giggle at?—Leave your idiot tricks, and tell me what you mean.

Mrs. Wild. You are so testy—but I shall please you.

Wild. Shall you? I wish you would——

Mrs. Wild. Thus then—I have with sorrow long observed which way your warm affection moved, and found it would be in vain with open power to oppose you; I therefore worked by stratagem—I got the secret of your meeting, and I wrought so with my honest cousin, to supply her wanton place, that with some shame, at last, I might deceive your hard heart into kindness.

Wild. That, that again, sweet wife; and be a little Serious—Was it your plot to excuse your cousin, And be the bedfellow?

Mrs. Wild. 'Twas indeed, my dear.

Wild. 'Twas in hell, my dear.

Mrs. Wild. Bless me!

Wild. I am fitted, fitted with a pair of horns
Of my own making!

Mrs. Wild. What, do you take it thus?

Should you not rather thank, and think upon
That providence, that would not have you lost
In such a forest of loose thoughts. Come, be
Yourself again ; I am your handmaid still ;
And have learn'd so much piety to conceal
Whatever should dishonour you.

Wild. It buds——

It buds already ! I shall turn stark mad——
Horn mad !——

Mrs. Wild. What ails you ? Are you vex'd
Because your wantonness has thriv'd so well ?

Wild. Well with a vengeance ! And did you really
contrive the plot yourself ?

Mrs. Wild. I did.

Wild. You lie—I contriv'd some part of it—and can
you prove all this to be true ?

Mrs. Wild. I can—witness those tender joys, which,
though not meant for me——

Wild. Oh, damn your description !
I am satisfied.

Mrs. Wild. You seem angry——I did expect your
thanks.

Wild. Yes, I do thank you, thank you heartily ;
Most infinitely thank you.

Mrs. Wild. Doth this merit
No other payment but your scorn ? Then know,
Bad man, 'tis in my power to be reveng'd ;
And what I had a resolution
Should sleep in silent darkness, now shall look
Day in the face ; I'll publish to the world

How I am wrong'd, and with what stubbornness
You have despis'd the cure of your own fame;
Nor shall my cousin suffer in her honour.
I stoop as low as earth to shew my duty;
But too much trampled on, I rise to tell
The world, I am a woman.

Wild. No, no; hark you,
I do not mock you. I am taken with
The conceit; what a fine thing I have made myself?
Ne'er speak on't, thy device shall take; I'll love thee,
And kiss thee for't; thou'st paid me handsomely:
An admirable plot, and follow'd cunningly.

Mrs. Wild. Then I'm happy, husband, if you're
sincere.

Wild. Oh, very sincere, and very happy.

Mrs. Wild. In earnest of that sincerity,
Vouchsafe the kiss you promised.

Wild. There—there. [Kisses her.]

I'll see thee anon again; and lie with thee
To-night, without a stratagem. Penelope
Expects thee; keep all close: dear wife, no sen-
tences. [Hurries Mrs. Wilding off.]

I'm trick'd and trimm'd at my own charges rarely!
[Exit.]

ACT V. SCENE I.

The Street. Enter WILDING.

Wilding.

I am justly punish'd now for all my tricks,
 And pride o' th' flesh! I had ambition
 To make men cuckolds; now the devil has paid me,
 Paid me i' th' same coin; and I'll compare
 My forehead with the broadest of my neighbours:
 But, ere it spreads too monstrous, I must have
 Some plot upon this Hazard. He supposes
 He has enjoy'd Penelope, and my trick's
 To drive the opinion home, to get him marry her,
 And make her satisfaction. The wench
 Has oft commended him; he may be won to't.
 I never meant to part with all her portion:
 Perhaps he'll thank me for the moiety;
 And this dispos'd on, she's conjur'd to silence.
 It must be so.

Enter HAZARD.

Haz. Jack Wilding, how is't, man?
 How goes the plow at home? What says the lady
 Guinever, that was humbled in your absence?
 You have the credit with her, all the glory:
 What says she, Jack? Does she hide her eyes,
 And blush, and cry, you are a fine gentleman!
 Turn a one side, or drop a handkerchief,

H

And stoop, and take occasion to leer
And laugh upon thee ?

Wild. Nothing less : I know not
What thou'st done to her, but she's very sad.

Haz. I'll be hanged then.

Wild. Thou must imagine,
I did the best to comfort her.

Haz. She's melancholy
For my absence, man : I'll keep her company
Again to-night.

Wild. And nothing now but sighs, and cries I have
Undone her.

Haz. Ay, ay, the old cant—she's a fool.

Wild. To be plain,
Although she has no thought but I was her gallant,
You are the only argument of her sadness.

Haz. How can that be ?

Wild. When I had merrily
Excus'd what had been done, she fetch'd a sigh,
And with some tears reveal'd her love to you ;
That she had lov'd you long, but by this act
Of mine, d'ye mark ? she was become unworthy
To hope so good a fortune ; I cannot tell,
But she is strangely passionate.

Haz. For me ?

Wild. Ay, for you.

Haz. Why, now I do recollect myself,
She has sometimes smil'd upon me.

Wild. Nay, believe it,
She is taken with thee above all the world.

Haz. And yet she was content you should——
'Bove all the world.

Wild. But 'twas your better fate
To be the man ; it was her destiny
Contrived it thus—Thou art a gentleman,
And must consider the poor gentlewoman.

Haz. What wouldst ha' me do ?

Wild. Make her amends.

Haz. What do you mean ?

Wild. Marry her.

Haz. Marry a strumpet !

Wild. You had first possession, and hadst thou married earlier, thou couldst but have had her first ; besides, none know but we ourselves, and we, for weighty reasons, must be secret.

Haz. Why, ay, that's true ; but then for weightier reasons, I must not marry her——

Wild. Come, come, thou hast a tender heart,
Heav'n knows ! she may be desperate.

Haz. A fair riddance ; we have enough o' th' tribe ;
I am sorry I cannot furnish her expedition with a pair
of my own garters.

Wild. I know thou art more charitable ; she may
prove a happy wife ; what woman but has frailty ?

Haz. Let her make the best on't ; set up shop i' th'
Strand or Westminster, she may have custom.

Wild. She has a portion will maintain her like a
gentlewoman, and your wife.

Haz. Where is't ?

Wild. In my possession ; and I had rather thou Shouldst have it than another.

Haz. Thank you heartily.

A single life has single care : pray keep it.

Wild. Come, thou shalt know I love thee——thou shalt have

More by thousands, than I resolv'd
To part with, 'cause I would call thee cousin too ;
Ten thousand pounds, Will, she has to her portion !
I hop'd to put her off with half the sum,
That's truth ;——some younger brother would have
thank'd me,

And given me my *quietus*—Is't a match ?

Haz. A pretty sum ! Ten thousand pounds will make
What's crooked, straight again.

Wild. Th'art in the right ;
Or for the better sound, as the grammarians
Say, I will call it—fifty hundred pounds !
By'r lady, a pretty stock ; enough, an' need be,
To buy up half the women in a county.

Haz. Here's my hand ; I'll consider on't no farther ;
Is she prepar'd ?

Wild. Leave that to me.

Haz. No more.

Wild. I'll instantly about it.

Haz. Will you confirm this before witnesses ?

Wild. Bring a hundred—bring them presently.

Haz. I'll follow you.

Wild. Now I'm a little easy—

The bitt'rest pill, when gilded, will be swallow'd.

[*Exit Wild.*

Haz. Ha, ha!

The project moves better than I expected;
What pains he takes out of his ignorance?

Enter BARNACLE.

Barn. Oh! sir, I am glad I ha' found you.

Haz. I was not lost.

Barn. My nephew, sir, my nephew.

Haz. What of him?

Barn. He's undone, he's undone! you have undone him.

Haz. What's the matter?

Barn. You have made him, sir, so valiant, I am afraid

He's not long liv'd: he quarrels now with every body:
And roars, and domineers, and shakes the pent-houses.

What shall I do? I fear he will be kill'd:
I take a little privilege myself,
Because I threaten to disinherit him;
But nobody else dares talk or meddle with him:
Is there no way to take him down again,
And make him coward?

Haz. There are ways to tame him.

Barn. Now I wish heartily you had beaten him
For the hundred pounds.

Haz. That may be done yet.

Barn. Is't not too late? But d'ye think 'twill humble him?

I expect every minute he's abroad
To hear he has kill'd somebody, or receive him
Brought home with half his brains, or but one leg.

Haz. What would you have me do?

Barn. I'll pay you for't,
If you will beat him soundly, sir, and leave him
But as you found him; for if he continue
A blade, and be not kill'd, he won't escape
The gallows long; and 'tis not for my honour
He should be hang'd.

Haz. I shall deserve as much
To lay this mettle, as I had to quicken it.

Barn. Nay, 'tis my meaning to content you, sir;
And I shall take it as a favour too,
If for the same price you made him valiant,
You will unblade him: here's the money, sir;
As weighty gold as t'other: 'cause you should not
Lay it on lightly: break no limb, and bruise him
Three quarters dead, I care not: he may live
Many a fair day after it.

Haz. You shew
An uncle's love in this; trust me to cure
His valour.

Barn. He's here; do but observe.

Enter Nephew.

And beat him, sir, accordingly,

Neph. How now, uncle?

Barn. Thou art no nephew of mine, th'art a rascal
I'll be at no more charge to make thee a gentleman :
Pay for your dice and drinkings ; I shall have
The surgeon's bills brought shortly home to me ;
Be troubled to bail thee from the sessions ;
And afterwards make friends to the recorder
For a reprieve ; yes—I will see thee hang'd first.

Neph. And be at the charge to paint the gallows
too ;

If I have a mind, the waits shall play before me,
And I'll be hang'd in state, three stories high, uncle :
But first I'll cut your throat.

Barn. Bless me ! defend me.

Enter ACRELESS, SELLOWAY, and LITTLESTOCK.

Acr. How now, what's the matter ?

Sell. Master Barnacle !

Barn. There's an ungracious bird of my own nest,
Will murder me.

Litt. He wo'not sure ?

Haz. Put up,

And ask your uncle presently forgiveness ;
Or I will huff thee.

Neph. Huff me ?—I will put up
At thy entreaty.

Haz. Gentlemen, you remember
This noble gallant.

Acr. Cousin of yours, I take it.

Haz. A fine cousin ! He lent me in your company
A box o' th' ear.

Neph. No, no, I gave it,
I gave it freely; keep it, never think on't;
I can make bold with thee another time;
Would it had been twenty.

Haz. One's too much to keep.
I am a gamester, and remember always
My debts of honour—First, the principal—

[*Strikes him.*

And this for the use—

[*Strikes him again.*

Neph. Use! Wouldst th'adst given it my uncle.

Haz. They have cost him already two hundred
pounds

And upwards, shotten herring, thing of noise!

Neph. Oh, for my man Dwindle,

And his basket-hilt now! my uncle shall rue this.

Haz. Down, presently, and before these gentlemen;
Desire his pardon.

Neph. How! desire his pardon?

Haz. Do it I say.

Neph. I will ask his pardon; I beseech you, un-
cle——

Haz. And swear.

Neph. And do swear——

Haz. To be obedient, never more to quarrel.

Neph. Why, look you, gentlemen, I hope you are
persuaded,

By taking this so patiently, that I am
Not over valiant.

Barn. I suspect him still.

Neph. Indeed you need not, uncle.

Haz. If ever he prove rebellious, in act
Or language, let me know it.

Neph. Will you not give
Me leave to roar abroad, a little, for my credit?

Barn. Never, sirrah; now I'll tame you.
I thank you gentlemen; command me for
This courtesy.

Neph. 'Tis possible I may
With less noise grow more valiant hereafter:
'Till then I am in all your debts.

Barn. Be rul'd,
And be my nephew again: this was my love,
My love, dear nephew.

Neph. If your love consist
In kicking, uncle, let me love you again.

Barn. Be silent, sirrah.

Neph. I am dumb.

Acr. Then his uncle paid for't?

Haz. Heartily, heartily.
Whither are you going, gentlemen?

Acr. As you shall lead us, Hazard.

Haz. 'Tis lucky then;
Will you be witnesses to a desperate
Bargain I mean to drive within this hour?
No less than bartering for my liberty.

Sell. The devil! not be married, sure?

Haz. 'Tis even so—and were I sure that this my
valiant friend [*To Nephew.*] would not be angry at
my choice, I'd tell you who was the maid elect.

Neph. Choose where you list; I'll ne'er be angry

more, nor woo again; I have had of both my *quantum sufficit*.

Haz. Her name's Penelope.

Neph. Take her, and welcome; she'll pay you in the coin you've favour'd me with.

Barn. May you win and wear her, Mr. Hazard; and since my nephew merits not the maid, I wish you and her happiness.

Haz. Thanks, Mr. Barnacle—I will away to Wildings, and prepare for your reception—will you follow me?

Litt. We will.

[*Exit Hazard.*]

Barn. What say you, gentlemen? shall we drink this couple in a glass of sack, and then to wish 'em joy?

Acr. Agreed.

Neph. I'm for any thing.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

WILDING'S House. Enter Mrs. WILDING and
PENELOPE.

Pen. Why, you would not have me encourage this Hazard?

Mrs. Wild. Indeed but I would.

Pen. What a gamester! a profligate! No, no, thanks to youth, good spirits, and a tolerable person, not so desperate as that, Mrs. Wilding.

Mrs. Wild. His gaming is accidental—A younger

brother, and bred to no business, naturally leads to the dice for his supplies. I know he is tired of the company he has kept; his honour is as yet unimpeached, and with your fortune what can either of you want, or desire farther?

Pen. Indeed, I dare not think of it. *And yet, cousin, you might persuade me to any thing. I have the highest opinion of you. Give me a little time——prejudices are hard to conquer, and yet who knows——Bless me! he's here.*

Enter HAZARD.

Mrs. Wild. Mr. Hazard, I have pleaded hard for you, and promised much for you. You must now try the cause yourself.

Haz. I am indebted to you—all things succeed beyond your thought—pray give me a little opportunity with your kinswoman.

Mrs. Wild. I will withdraw. [*Going.*

Pen. Don't go without me cousin, you know I have business with you.

Mrs. Wild. *And so has that gentleman, my dear; and he is in such haste, poor man! he can't stay: finish with him, and I'm at your service.* [*Exit.*

Haz. I know not how to woo her——
Sweet lady——

Pen. Your pleasure, sir?

Haz. Pray, let me ask you a question——
If you had lost your way, and met one,

A traveller like myself, that knew the coast
O th' country, would you thank him to direct you ?

Pen. That common manners would instruct.

Haz. I think so.

Pen. But there are many ways to the wood.

Haz. And which

Would you desire ; the nearest path and safest,
Or that wick leads about ?

Pen. Without all question

The nearest and safest.

Haz. Can you love then ?

Pen. *That is the nearest indeed. If you are upon that road, I could wish you would go a little about.*

Haz. No, no, madam ; you have said, and I must have an answer.

Pen. *You are in a violent hurry, sure. What answer would you have, sir ?*

Haz. A direct one. Can you love ?

Pen. Pray give me a little time.

Haz. Not a moment. Can you love, I say ?

Pen. I were a devil else.

Haz. And can you love a man ?

Pen. Bless me ! you frighten me out of my wits.

What did you say, sir ?

Haz. Can you love a man ?

Pen. A man ! what else, sir !

Haz. Y' are so far on your way. Now love but me,
Y' are at your journey's end ; what say you to me ?

Pen. Nothing, sir.

Haz. That's no answer ; you must say something.

Pen. *I wish you'd guess, and not compel me to speak.*

Haz. D'y' hear, lady?

Setting this foolery aside, I know

You cannot choose but love me.

Pen. Why?

Haz. I have been told so.

Pen. You are easy of belief ;

I think I should be best acquainted with

My own thoughts, and I dare not be so desperate

To conclude.

Haz. Come, come ; y' are a dissembling gentle-
woman.

I know your heart ; you have lov'd me a great while.

What should I play the fool for ? If you remember,

I urg'd some wild discourse in the behalf

Of Barnacle ; it was a trial of thee ;

That humour made me love thee ; and since that, thy
virtue.

Pen. Indeed, sir ?

Haz. Indeed, sir ? why, I have been contracted to
thee.

Pen. *The deuce you have!* How long ?

Haz. This half hour ; know thy portion, and shall
have it.

Pen. Strange!

Haz. Nay, I'll have thee too.

Pen. You will ? *How can I help myself?*

Haz. You cannot help it ; thy kind cousin will have
it so :

'Tis his own plot, to make thee amends; is't not
Good mirth? but 'tis not love to thee or me;
But to have me possess he is no cuckold:
I see through his device, thou art much beholden to
him:

He meant to have put thee off with half thy portion;
But that, as things have happen'd, we must keep
secret.

Say, is't a match? I have ten thousand pounds too,
"Thank the dice:" let's put our stocks together.
We have love enough—happiness must follow.

Pen. *Pray, stop, sir, we're at our journey's end.*
My guardian's here.

Enter WILDING.

Wild. So close! I'm glad on't. This prepares Will
Hazard,

And my young cousin. A word, Penelope.

Haz. Now will he make all sure.

Wild. You us'd me coarsely,
But I have forgot it. What discourse have you
With this gentleman?

Pen. *Very strange discourse.* He seems to be a suitor.

Wild. Entertain him, d'y' hear; you may do worse;
Be rul'd:

'Twas in my thought to move it; does he not
Talk strangely?

Pen. I told you he did.

Wild. Was that all?

Pen. *What?*

Wild. Nothing. Let me counsel you
To love him; call him husband.

Pen. I resolve
Never to marry without your consent, *since I have got*
my own. [Aside.] [They talk apart.]

Enter ACRELESS, LITTLESTOCK, *and* SELLOWAY.

Haz. Gentlemen, welcome.

Pen. If you bestow me, sir, I will be confident
I am not lost; I must confess I love him.

Wild. No more then; lose no time. Kind gentlemen,

Y'are come most seasonably to be the witnesses
Of my consent. I have examin'd both
Your hearts, and freely give thee here my kinswoman;
No sooner shall the church pronounce
You married, but challenge what is hers.

Haz. Ten thousand pound.

Wild. I do confess it is her portion.
You sha'not stay to talk. Nay, gentlemen;
Pray see the business finish'd.

Acr. We'll attend him.

Wild. The lawyer with his papers are within;
I've sign'd and seal'd the contract, and with it
Give up all my right and guardianship
To this my friend.

[To Haz.]

Haz. Which I with joy accept of——

Pen. *And I for better and for worse.*

Haz. Sweet Penelope, [Takes Pen. hand.
Be you the witness. [Exit with Pen.]

Wild. So, so ; this will confirm him in the opinion,
Penelope was the creature he enjoyed,
And keep off all suspicion of my wife,
Who is still honest, in the imagination
That only I embrac'd her : all's secure,
And my brow's smooth again. Who can deride me,
But I myself ? Ha ! that's too much ; I know it ;
And spite of these tricks, am a Cornelius.
Cannot I bribe my conscience to be ignorant ?
Why then I ha' done nothing : yes, advanc'd
The man, that grafted shame upon my forehead :
Vexation ! parted with ten thousand pound,
And am no less a cuckold than before !
Was I predestin'd to this shame and mockery ?
Where were my brains ? Yet why am I impatient ?
Unless betray'd, he cannot reach the knowledge ;
And then no matter——yes, I am curst again :
My torment multiplies ; Penelope
Will clear herself, and then that ruins all !
I would she had been strumpeted. I am lost,
And must be desperate——Kill him ? No——my wife.
Not so good——death is over black and horrid ;
And I am grown ridiculous to myself.
I must do something.

Enter BARNACLE and Nephew.

Barn. Master Wilding, welcome—I have not seen
you a great while.

Wild. Then I have been happy a great while.
Do you know me ?

Barn. Know you ?

Wild. They say I am much alter'd of late.

Barn. There is some alteration in your forehead.

Wild. My forehead !

Barn. 'Tis not smooth enough—you're troubled—
Is your wife within ?

Wild. What would you with her ?

Barn. I know the matter that's a bréwing.

Neph. *Et ego.*

Barn. You have it here, Mr. Wilding.

[*Pointing to his head.*]

Wild. The devil !——Do you see 'em ?
Have they broke thè surface ?

Barn. I mean Mr. Hazard's business.

Wild. I mean that too. My head's a torment to me.

Neph. What would you give now, Mr. Wilding, to
be of the nation without heads ?

Wild. Would I could change conditions with these
fools ; they are not now troubled with being cuckolds.

Enter Mrs. WILDING.

Mrs. Wild. Gentlemen, your servant.

Barn. Joy, joy to you, Mrs. Wilding.

Wild. Wife, you are a whore ; you shall know
more hereafter—I must go live in the fòrest.

Mrs. Wild. And I i' th' common.

Wild. She'll turn prostitute !

Enter HAZARD, PENELOPE, ACRELESS, &c.

Haz. Your leave, gentlefolks ; who wishes us joy ?

Barn. Married ?

Haz. Fast as the law can tie us ;
The priest must bless the knot.

Acr. We are witnesses.

Haz. Cousin, ten thousand pound ; and lady, now
I must thank you for this among the rest. Look then
with an eye of love upon me.

Wild. No matter, she'll love thee afterwards. An'
she do not, she can but cuckold thee ; there be more
i' th' parish, man.

Mrs. Wild. In our parish, husband ?

Wild. I'll be divorc'd now.

Wife, you're a whore.

Haz. Ho, there ! no big words ; come,
We must tell something in your ear : be merry ;
You are no cuckold, make no noise. I know
That's it offends your stomach.

Wild. Ha !

Haz. I touch'd not her, nor this, with one rude action.
We'll talk the circumstance another time :
Your wife expected you ; but 'when I came,
She had prepar'd a light, and her cousin here,
T' have made you blush, and chide you into honesty :
Seeing their chaste simplicity, I was won
To silence, which brought on my better fortune.

Wild. Can this be real ?

Mrs. Wild. By my hopes of peace
I' th' t'other world, you have no injury :
My plot was only to betray you to
Love and repentance.

Pen. Be not troubled, sir;

I am a witness of my cousin's truth;
And hope you'll make all prosper, in renewing
Your faith to her.

Haz. Be wise, and no more words:

Thou hast a treasure in thy wife; make much of her.
For any act of mine, she is as chaste
As when she was new-born. Love, love her, Jack.

Wild. I am asham'd: pray give me all forgiveness.
I see my follies—Heaven invites me gently
To thy chaste bed. Be thou again my dearest:
Thy virtue shall instruct me. Joy to all.

Haz. These be love's miracles: a spring-tide flow
in every bosom.

Barn. May ease, health, happiness attend you, lady.

Pen. From you, sir, 'tis a double compliment.
Have I your pardon, sir, for my refusal of the honour
of your nephew's hand?

Barn. You have.

Neph. And mine too, lady, with thanks to the bargain.

Wild. To-day I'll feast you all; and, wife, be this
our bridal day: let us begin new joys with these our
happy cousins.

Mrs. Wild. My joys are at their full; and, dear Penelope,
my heart o'erflows with love, delight, and
gratitude.

Pen. May I deserve your friendship, and follow
your example.

Haz. Be witness, gentlemen, that wedded here,

wedded for ever, I no more shall follow that fickle harlot Fortune—I renounce my follies; fly to peace, content, and love.

*From riot, care, intemperance, and vice;
And from the fountain head of all—the dice.*

Sell. The sinner preaches, Wilding; but his lectures will make few penitents.

Wild. I'm sorry for't——

I own myself a convert to these truths,
And wish that you had felt 'em. This my pilot,
My prudent pilot, steers me safe thro' storms,
Thro' rocks and quicksands, to a happier coast:

*The syren's voice shall charm my ear no more;
With joy I quit that treach'rous, fatal shore;
Where a friend's ruin is by friends enjoy'd,
And ev'ry virtue is by turns destroy'd.*

[Exeunt omnes.]



EPILOGUE.

WRITTEN BY A FRIEND, AND SPOKEN BY MRS.
WILDING.

MY conduct now will every mind employ,
And all my friends, I'm sure, will wish me joy :
'Tis joy indeed, and fairly worth the cost,
To've gain'd the wand'ring heart I once had lost.
Hold, says the prudish dame, with scornful sneer,
I must, sweet madam, stop your high career ;
Where was your pride, your decency, your sense,
To keep your husband in that strange suspense ?
For my part, I abominate these scenes——
No ends compensate for such odious means :
To me, I'm sure—but 'tis not fit to utter——
The very thought has put me in a flutter !

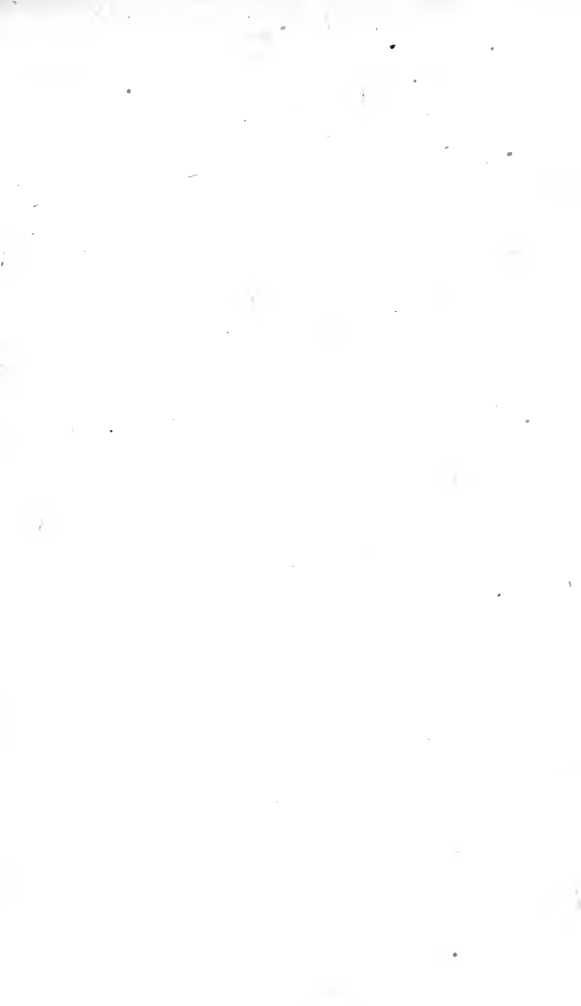
Odious, says Miss, of quick and forward parts ;
Had she done more, she'd given him his deserts :
O, had the wretch but been a spark of mine,
By Jove, I should have paid him in his coin.

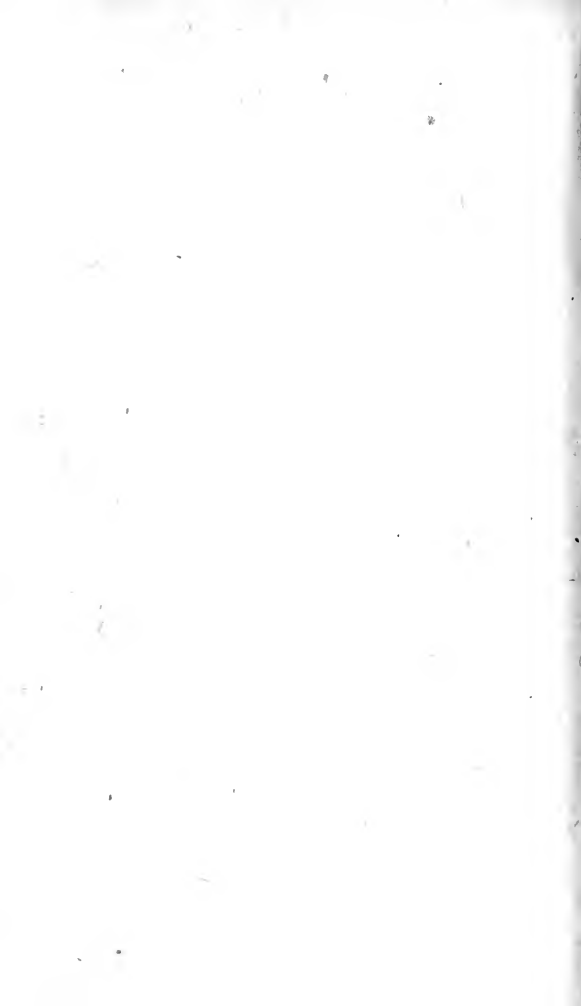
Another critic ventures to declare,
She thinks that cousin Pen has gone too far :
Nay, surely, she has play'd a gen'rous part ;
A fair dissembler, with an honest heart.
Would any courtly dame in such a case,
Solicit, get, and then resign the place ?

*She knew, good girl, my husband's reformation,
Was (what you'll scarce believe) my only passion :
And when your scheme is good, and smart, and clever,
Cousins have been convenient persons ever.
With all your wisdom, madam, cries a wlt,
Had Pen been false, you had been fairly bit :
'Twas dangerous, sure, to tempt her youth with sin ;
The knowing ones are often taken in.
The truly good ne'er treat with indignation
A natural, unaffected, generous passion ;
But with an open, liberal praise, commend
Those means which gain'd the honourable end.*

*Ye beauteous, happy fair, who know to bless,
Warm'd by a mutual flame, this truth confess ;
That should we every various pleasure prove,
There's nothing like the heart of him we love.*

THE END.









De Wilde pinx!

Audinet fecit

M^r BENSLEY as HAROLD.
disastrous Signs!
What shall I do?

THE
BATTLE OF HASTINGS.

A
TRAGEDY,
By RICHARD CUMBERLAND, Esq.

ADAPTED FOR
THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,
AS PERFORMED AT THE
THEATRES-ROYAL,
DRURY-LANE AND COVENT-GARDEN.

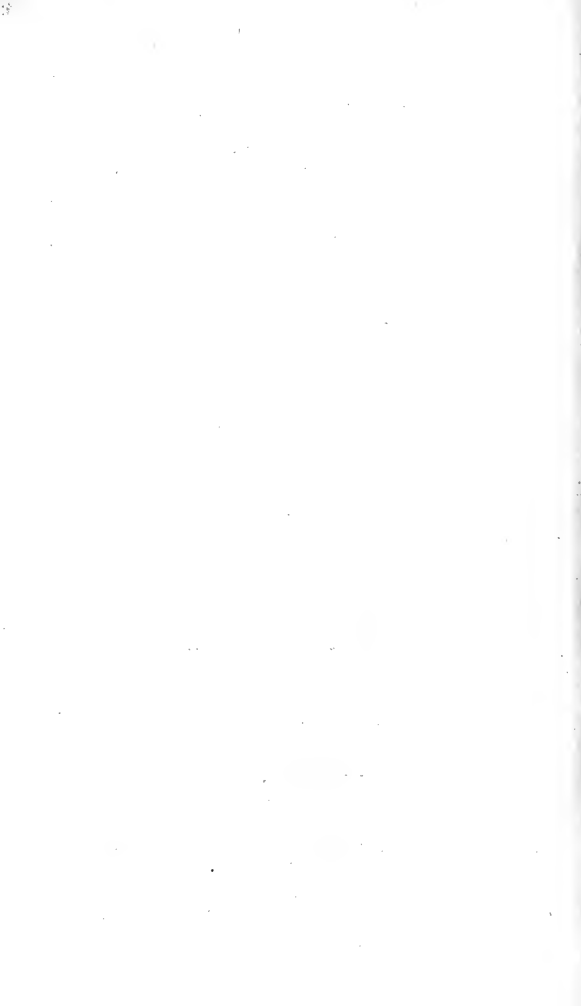
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MDCCXCIII.



PROLOGUE.

SPOKEN BY MR. HENDERSON,

*To holy land, in superstition's day,
When bare-foot pilgrims trod their weary way,
By mother church's unremitting law
Seourg'd into grace, with shoulders red and raw;
Kneeling demure before the sacred shrine,
On the hard flint they begg'd the boon divine;
Pardon for what offending flesh had done,
And pity for the long, long course they'd run,
Fines, pains and penalties, securely past,
Slow pac'd forgiveness met their prayer at last,
Full absolution from conceding Rome,
Cancell'd all sin, past, present, and to come.*

*Your poet thus prophanely led aside
To range o'er tragic land without a guide,
To pick perhaps, with no invidious aim,
A few cast fallings from the tree of fame.
Damn'd, tho' untried, by the despotic rule
Of the stern doctors in detraction's school;
Lash'd down each column of a public page,
And driv'n o'er burning ploughshares to the stage,*

*Re-rhim'd and ridicul'd with doggrel wit,
Sues out a pardon from his Pope—the Pit.
Pensive he stands in penitential weeds,
With a huge rosary of untold beads;
Sentenc'd for past offences to rehearse,
Ave Apollos to the God of Verse;
And sure there's no one but an author knows
The penance, which an author undergoes.*

*If then your worships a few stripes award,
Let not your beadles lay them on too hard;—
For in the world there's not a thing so thin,
So full of feeling, as your Poet's skin:
What if, perchance, he snatch'd a playful kiss
From that free hearted romp the Comic Miss;
That frolick's past, he's turn'd to years of grace,
And a young sinner now supplies his place.
Sure you'll not grudge a little sober chat
With this demure old tabby tragic cat;
No charge lies here of conversation crim,
He hopes you'll think her fame, no worse for him.*



Dramatis Personae.

DRURY-LANE.

Men.

HAROLD, King of England,	- - -	Mr. Bensley.
EDGAR ATHELING,	- - - - -	Mr. Henderson.
Earl EDWIN,	- - - - -	Mr. Palmer.
Earl WALTHEGF,	- - - - -	Mr. Brereton.
Earl of MERCIA, Brother to Harold,		Mr. Norris.
Earl of NORTHUMBERLAND,	- -	Mr. Aicken.
SIFFRIC,	- - - - -	Mr. Farren.
REGINALD,	- - - - -	Mr. Chaplin.
RAYMOND,	- - - - -	Mr. Hurst.
DUNCAN, a Scottish Seer,	- - -	Mr. Chambers.

Women.

MATILDA, Daughter to Harold,	-	Miss Young.
EDWINA,	- - - - -	Mrs. Yates.
SABINA,	- - - - -	Mrs. Colles.

Attendants on MATILDA, Guards, Foresters, Wardens, and
various Attendants.



THE BATTLE OF HASTINGS.

ACT I. SCENE I.

*The Outside of a stately ancient Castle. The Gate closed,
and the Bugle in the Slings. Time, before Break of Day.
Earl EDWIN enters.*

Edwin.

WHETHER 'tis now the secret witching hour,
When the smart imps work their malignant spells
Unfriendly to man's health; or that Heaven sends
These warnings, these misgivings to forerun
And harbinger some strange calamity,
I know not: but there's something passing here
Beyond the mind's conjecture ominous.

RAYMOND speaks from the Walls.

Ray. Stand! who goes there?

Ed. A friend.

Ray. May none but friends

Approach these gates! what wakeful man art thou,
Whom busy care provokes thus early forth,
Ere the grey twilight glimmers in the east?

Ed. Know'st thou not me : and needs there light
for that ?

Sounds not this voice familiar to thine ear,
Or have the darkling wizzards of the night :
Confounded thy clear organs ? Thee I know ;
Raymond, descend and open to thy lord.

Ray. My lord, my master !— [*He disappears.*]

Ed. [*Alone.*] Venerable pile,
Whose plain rough features show like honesty ;
Cradle of loyalty from earliest time ;
Ye antique towers, courts, banner-bearing halls,
Trophies, and tombs of my renown'd forefathers ;
And you, surrounding oaks, father's and sons,
And old, old grandsires, chroniclers of time,
By which the forest woodman marks his tale,
If fate will doom you to a Norman master,
Farewell ! ye perish in your country's fall.

RAYMOND comes out from the Castle.

Ray. See, lord ! your castle opens wide its arms,
Your porters, warders, foresters shall rouse :
Herald, provoke the bugle : spread the joy.

[*Herald goes to sound the bugle.*]

Ed. What joy ?—forbear : there is no joy for Edwin.

Ray. Are we then lost ; is Normandy victorious !

Ed. No : in the swoln and pregnant womb of fate
Lies the yet unborn hour.—Dismiss the herald,
And gently close the gate.— [*Ray. closes the gate.*]
Ye, who have bosoms,
Unscar'd by sharp vexation's thorny scourge,

Sleep while you may. 'Tis well ; come hither, Raymond ;

Nay, I account thee as a friend—be nearer :
Pass'd all things quiet on thy watch this night ?

Ray. All things were quiet.

Ed. Far, as well as near ;

Wide as thine ear could carry ? no rude straggler
Scouring the night ? no neighing at the gate ?
No trampling heard ? no talking, as of parties
Met by assignment ?

Ray. Hah !—in very truth
To all these questions, no.

Ed. I must believe thee ;
The more I 'm lost in wonder : but confess,
At my last question wherefore didst thou start,
And arch thy brow significantly ? speak ;
Thou may'st reveal thy thoughts.

Ray. Nay, good my lord,
My thoughts are little worth.

Ed. I see thou 'rt cautious,
So let it pass—How fares our sister ? blooms
The rose of health fresh on Edwina's cheek,
As it was wont ?

Ray. It brightens, as it blows.

Ed. Yes, Raymond, she is fair ; Heaven for the sins
Of this offending country made her fair ;
Oh, I had treasur'd up such thoughts !—But mark,
Edmund ; the youth whom I have father'd, he,
Who in the beating surge of black despair,
But for my saving arm, had sunk outright

And perish'd fathoms deep, last night i'th' camp,
Soon as the guard had gone its stated round,
Vaulted the trench like Perseus on his steed,
Then fled, as if he'd overtake the wind,
Whither Heav'n knows.

Ray. Fled!—death to honour, fled!

Ed. Fled at this glorious crisis. Oh, it cuts
My heart's best hope asunder!

Ray. Heavenly vengeance
O'er take and strike him!

Ed. Peace!—You must not curse him.

Ray. Hah! wherefore not?

Ed. Because—expect a wonder—
Because he is thy king.

Ray. Uphold me, Heaven!

Ed. Mine and thy king; of Alfred's line a king;
Edgar, call'd Atheling; the rightful lord
Of this ungrateful realm, which Kentish Harold
Audaciously usurps—

Ray. What do I hear?

Alas I thought him poor, an orphan youth
The child of hard misfortune.

Ed. Think so still,
Or keep these thoughts untold.

Ray. Had I known this,
I would have serv'd him hourly on my knees:
O noble sir, direct me where to seek him,
How to restore him to these peaceful shades.

Ed. Not for the world; no, if we meet again,
Back to the English camp he shall repair;

The scene of all his hopes : Oh such a form
Of majesty with youthful beauty grac'd,
He was the soldier's idol ; such a spirit
Beam'd from his eyes, his presence like the sun
Gladden'd beholders hearts.

Ray. I have a mistress,
A young and beauteous lady—

Ed. Name her not,
The source of all my shame : Shall it be said
That Edwin rais'd his sovereign to the throne,
Only to place a sister at his side ?
Perish the thought ! Now learn a mighty secret—
Matilda loves him ; Harold's matchless daughter
Loves Edgar Atheling ; her dower a kingdom :
Therefore no talk of Edmund and Edwina,
They meet no more. Now, Raymond, had I lodg'd
My secret in a light and leaky bosom,
Better my sword should rip it up at once.
And take it back again—But thou art honest.

Ray. You were not wont to doubt me.

Ed. Nay, I will not.

Hah ! what is this ? who bade this music forth ?

[*Clarinets at a distance.*]

Ray. My lord, I know not.

Ed. Whence proceeds it ? Mark.

Ray. If my ear fail not, from the beachen grove,
West of king Alfred's tower.

Ed. Lead to the place.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter EDGAR with Foresters bearing Clarinets.

Edg. Now breathe astrain, if your rude stops will
let you,

Soft as a lover's sigh—Nay, you're too loud—
Mark, where you've rous'd the gentle sleeping deer.
Fellows, begone; away!—*Edwina!*

[Edwina appears at a window.]

Edw. Edmund!

Oh, I have suffer'd a long age of absence.

Edg. Come then and make these few short moments
blest.

Edw. How shall I come? Tear down these iron bars
And leap into thine arms? What shall I do?

Edg. *[Goes to the castle gate and discovers it to be open.]*
By all my hopes, the castle gate is open;
Descend; be swift!

Edw. As thine own thoughts. *[She disappears.]*

Edg. *[Alone.]* O love!

Small elf, who by the glow-worm's twinkling light,
Fine fairy-finger'd child, can slip the bolt,
While the cramm'd warden snores, this is thy doing.
Lo, where she comes, so breaks the morning forth,
Blushing and breathing odours—

Enter EDWINA.

O thou trembler,
Rest on my faithful bosom; fairest, tell me,
Still dost thou love? speak, is thine Edmund welcome?

Edw. Is the sun welcome to the wakeful eyes
Of the wreck'd mariner, when o'er the waves
The long-expected dayspring of his hope,
Mounts in the worship'd east—But why comes Edmund
Thus wrapt in darkness at this secret hour
As to a guilty meeting?

Edg. 'Tis the hour
Sacred to love and me, ere noisy labour
Wakens the sun, while yet the fairy elves
Dance in their dewy rounds; the silent hour
Before the lark her shrill-ton'd matins sings,
Or morning issues from the nuptial east,
And to the bosoms of the nursing hours
The new-born day commits: it is the hour
When every flying minute should be wafted
Back to the skies on downy wings of love.

Edw. Away, your words affright me; you comfort
With mad ambition, Edmund; and your love
So gentle once, is like the wars you follow,
Fiery and fierce.

Edg. Instruct me in thy wishes;
Tell me what love should be.

Edw. Love should be pure,
Harmless as pilgrims kisses on the shrines
Of virgin martyrs; holy as the thoughts
Of dying saints, when angels hover o'er them;
Harmonious, gentle, soft; such love should be,
The zephyr—not the whirlwind, of the soul.

Edg. Yes, but my love, like never-ending time,

Will neither be determin'd, nor describ'd.
The poet by the magic of his song
Can charm the list'ning moen, ascend the spheres,
And in his airy and extravagant flight
Belt wide creation's round ; yet can he never
Invent that form of words to speak my passion.

Edw. If such your passion, why this secret meeting;
Why talk of silent hours? Let earth and heaven
Look on and witness to your love ! so truth,
So nature speaks—I know no other language.

Edg. Oh, that the throne of this proud realm were
mine !

That I might say before the applauding world ;
Ascend, my lovely bride, and be a queen.

Edw. A queen ! what idle dreams perplex thy fancy?
Are there no blessings for the poor and humble ?

Edg. Yes, but a brother's curse—

Edw. A brother's curse !

Doth he not love thee, wait upon thee hourly,
Talk of thee ever, bend down his proud spirit
Ev'n to a vassal's homage ? Nay, by heav'n,
With an idolatry of soul he loves thee ;
And shall he not applaud me for my choice ?

Edg. He will renounce thee, hate thee for thy choice.

Edw. Away, I'll not believe it : hate ! renounce !
It cannot be ; hence with this dark reserve,
If thou know'st aught, which honour should unfold,
I do conjure thee, speak ; though late, confess.

Edg. By heav'n, thy brother—

Enter EDWIN hastily.

Ed. Are you found, young sir ?

O shame, shame, shame ! Is this the friend, the hero ?
Have I deserv'd this from you ?

Edg. If to love

The best, the fairest of her sex is base,
Vile and ungrateful ; if it be a sin
Morning and eve to name her in my prayers,
I am of all most guilty.

Ed. You abuse

The weakness of a fond unguarded orphan,
Parlying in secret by the moon's pale beam :
The tenderest flower that withers at the breeze,
Or, if the amorous sun but steal a kiss,
Drops its soft head and dies, is not more frail
Than maiden reputation ; 'tis a mirror
Which the first sigh defiles.

Edg. Look at that form ;

With all thy cold philosophy survey it,
And wonder, if thou can'st, why I adore.

Ed. Away, nor vex my too, too patient spirit !

With this fond rhapsody : Hence, and to horse !
Buckle afresh your glittering armour on ;
For England, not Edwina, now demands you.
By your thrice-plighted oath I do conjure you,
By all the world calls honest, by your hopes,
Come to the camp ; if you return not with me,
The son, which rises yonder in the east,

Goes not more surely to his ev'ning grave
Than I to mine.

Edg. Lo, I obey your summons,
Fierce flinty warrior! in yon' beachen grove
Stands my caparison'd and ready steed;
There on the trunk, whose living bark records
My lov'd Edwina's name, hangs up my sword,
My mailed corslet and my plumed crest,
With all the proud apparel of the war:
When I am furnish'd, I shall court admittance
To this fair presence and implore a smile,
As my last parting boon; which if obtain'd,
Nor spells, nor talismans shall be so potent
To shield my bosom in the bleeding field,
As the sweet magic of Edwina's eyes.

Edw. If thou hast love or pity in thy soul,
Return, and tell the rest.

Edg. O death, to part!

[*Exit.*

Edw. Now, stern admonisher, I see my fate,
And I will bear it with what grace I can;
Not lightly, as philosophers prescribe
To others, when themselves are well at ease,
But deeply, feelingly, as one should do,
Whose heart by nature and by love made soft;
With sorrow and unkindness now is rent!

Ed. You love and you avow it—righteous heav'n!
What is there in the scope of human means,
Which my providing foresight hath not summon'd
To fence off this destruction! Lost Edwina;
Hath not thy brother, like a faithful pilot,

Sounded this dang'rous coast, where rocks and shallows

Wait for the wreck of honour's costly freight ?
Have I not pointed to the baneful quarter,
Whence cold and blasting disappointment blows
Withering thy beauty's bloom ?

Edw. Thou hast, my brother,
Thou hast done all that man could do to save me,
But Heaven is over all.

Ed. When last we parted,
Thou helpless orphan—what was then my caution ?

Edw. You caution'd me against unwary love ;
You warn'd me how I listen'd, how I look'd,
'Twas a vain warning ; I had look'd and listen'd,
And whilst I open'd my weak heart to pity,
I let in love withal.

Ed. You let in madness !

Edw. Did you not pity ? I have seen your eyes,
Unus'd to weep, turn fountains as they gaz'd !
Did you not love ? Your very soul was Edmund's ;
I know you 'll call it friendship—so did I,
But find too late 'twas love.

Ed. Call it despair——

For hope it must be never ; call it death.
Sure some malignant planet rul'd thy birth,
And thou art doom'd to nothing but disaster :
Three nights and days thy widow'd mother travail'd
With fruitless pangs, the fourth succeeding morn
She blest her new-born murderer and expir'd ;
Then, as 'tis said, my father's shade did walk ;

Then on the western tower the ominous owl
Scream'd at mid-day, the faithless misletoe
From its maternal oak untwin'd its arms,
And dropt without a blast.

Edw. No more ; but strike !
Mine is the crime to be belov'd by Edmund :
Draw forth thy sword and strike it to my heart—
That rebel heart, which will not be commanded ;
But, spite of death and Edwin, dares to love.
Why dost thou pause ?

Ed. Strike to thy heart ! O horror !
Not if an angel visibly descended,
And bade me give the blow.

Edw. Wilt thou not kill me ?

Ed. By heav'n, I would not harm thee to be lord
Of sea and earth.

Edw. Then take me to thine arms,
For still thou lov'st me ; still thou art my brother.

Ed. I am thy brother still ; and hold thy love
Dearer than relicks of departed saints,
Richer than hoarded piles of worship'd gold ;
Come then and seek content in some calm dwelling,
Some silent convent from the world withdrawn,
Where pray'r and penance make atonement sure,
Where meditation communing with Heaven
Shall sooth the rebel passions into peace,
Refine the soul and conquer love itself.

Edw. Talk not of cells and convents ; I am Edmund's.

Ed. Thou must forget the very name of Edmund.

Edw. His very name! why, for what cause? declare.

Ed. There is a cause, a cause approv'd by Heaven,
And crown'd with deathless glory: search no farther;
This hour he parts; return thou to thy rest—
When next we meet, thou shalt applaud and thank me.
Go, go, Edwina—nay—It must be so. [Exit.

Edw. [*Alone.*] Why then it shall be so: let him to
battle;

Tear us asunder—I can only die;
When I am gone, his fame shall be immortal.
So when the bleak and wintry tempest rends
The mantling ivy from the worship'd sides
Of some aspiring tower, where late it hung;
The stately mass, as with a sullen scorn,
From its proud height looks down upon the wreck,
And disencumber'd from its feeble guest,
Bares its broad bosom and defies the storm.

Enter EDGAR arm'd as for Battle.

Edg. Alone! O happy chance! at thy fond bidding
Obedient I return.

Edw. Hah! what art thou?

Edg. Dost thou not know me? Am I not thine Edmund?

Edw. Away! 'tis lost—I must forget that name.

Edg. Coin what new name thou wilt: let me be any
thing,

So 'tis but what you love, I shall be happy.

Edw. Are these the soft habiliments of love ?
This high proud plumage, these blood-stained arms ?
Go to the mistress whom you serve, ambition ;
And talk no more of love.

Edg. By heav'n I love thee
More than the sun-burnt earth loves soft'ning showers,
More than new-ransom'd captives love the day ;
Or dying martyrs, breathing forth their souls,
The acclamations of whole hosts of angels.

Edw. Why then leaves Edmund what so well he
loves ?

Edg. But to return more worthy of that love ;
Can I, oh tell me, can thine Edmund sleep
In these calm haunts, whilst war's insulting shout
Fills the wide cope of heav'n, and every blast,
That through this solitary forest howls,
Wafts to my ear my country's dying groans ?

Edw. If groans can move thee, why so deaf to mine ?
Mysterious youth, or now at once resolve me,
Or now for ever go ; who and what art thou ?
Why does my brother wrest thee from my sight ?
And why with that stern brow am I commanded
(Vain fruitless mandate) to forget my Edmund,
Forget thy very name and that dear hour,
When first he brought thee to these happy scenes ?
What tender charges did he then impose !
How did his tongue run over in thy praise,
'Till, honouring Edmund for a brother's sake,
I soon perceiv'd I lov'd him for his own.

Edg. Oh, there is such persuasion in thy looks,
I shall forget myself and tell thee all.

Edw. 'Twas then that Edmund told us thou wast
sprung
From the best blood which England's isle could boast ;
He said that thou wast Edgar's nearest friend,
That with his crown thy fortunes had been lost ;
Bade us revere thee, love thee as the king,
For that so close an union knit your souls,
Edgar and thou were one.

Edg. And truth he told,
For I am Edgar ; I am England's king.

Edw. King ! thou the king !

Edg. Be constant I am Edgar.

Edw. [*After a pause she sinks upon her knees.*]

The Heavens confirm your right, and build your
fortune

To it's deserved greatness ! on my knees
I beg a blessing on you, but for pity
Mock me no more, it is not noble in you,
And tortures my poor heart.

Edg. Hear me, Edwina.—

Edw. Fly me, disown me, leave me to my fate.

Edg. No, by this fond embrace I swear to live
For thee alone ; when I forsake Edwina,
Let me be chronicled to latest ages
For vile and false.—Remember'd in thy prayers,
As with impenetrable armour fenc'd,
Fearless I part ; fairest, and best, farewell !

May each good spirit of the night and day
Watch round thee hourly !—England and Edwina !

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT II. SCENE I.

*The English Camp. The royal Tent with the Banners of
HAROLD unfurled. Enter EDGAR and EDWIN.*

Edwin.

EDMUND, your steed is feather-footed, light
As gossamour ; and you, methinks, did ride,
As you 'd o'ertake the couriers of the sky,
Hors'd on the sightless winds : the camp yet sleeps ;
We have outstript the hour.

Edg. Mark, Edwin, mark,
How lovingly the strumpet winds salute
These flaunting banners of the earl of Kent :
Teach me some patience—O ye ministring storms,
Where did you sleep, while usurpation grew
To this proud height ?

Ed. No more—remember, sir,
You are a subject here.

Edg. King Edmund's heir,
Can he be subject to earl Goodwyn's son ?
If thou wouldst teach that lesson, sluice these veins
And let out Alfred's blood.

Ed. You are too loud :

Here comes Northumberland, a fiery spirit,
Which fourscore winters have not yet extinguish'd :
I pray you, though he be your house's foe,
Bear yourself gently tow'rds him, 'twill be wisdom.

Enter NORTHUMBERLAND, SIFFRIC, WALTHEOF,
and others.

North. The king not forth yet! Oh, it is the soul
Of discipline to harness with the sun:
Can'st thou not, Siffric, call to mind the day
When with a handful of Northumbrian kerns
I foil'd the king of Scots on Tweeda's brink?

Sif. 'I was on Saint Jude betimes.

North The grey-ey'd morn
Laugh'd to behold the vaunting sluggard fly,
As we did hollow him with hunter's cries
Back to his native wilds. Soft, who are these?
The faction of young Edgar: said you not
These men had fled the camp—But see where comes
Mercia, the princely brother of our king.

Enter Earl of MERCIA *with Attendants.*

Mer. Warriors, well met: health and a happy morn!
And may the sun, which dances on your plumes,
Still with new glories gild your conquering brows!
The king not yet abroad! still on his knees
For his dear people's sake.—How wears the day

North. Prince, till our royal leader shall come forth
There is no day: let him once sound to battle,
On piles of Norman slain we'll build him altars

High as Olympus ; in the battle's shout
We 'il chant our morning oraisons so loud,
That heaven's high vault shall echo with the peal.

Edg. How valiant-tongu'd we are ! Heav'n's favor
guard us,
And keep off the old adage !

Ed. Be more patient,
And let his humour pass.

Edg. Hang him, vain dotard,
I sicken at his folly.

Ed. See ! the king.

*[The curtain of the tent is suddenly drawn off, and
King Harold appears : he comes forward.]*

Har. Nobles, all hail. O sight of joyful hope
For suffering England ! patriot band of worthies
Confederate by the holiest league on earth
To the best dearest cause : how say you, friends—
Stand your hearts with us for immediate battle ?
Do they all beat to the same martial measure,
And shall we forth at once ?

North. Forth ! Strike the drums ;
Seize your bright spears, my gallant countrymen,
And let us drive these hungry wolves before us
Home to their howling forests.

Har. Valiant chiefs,
You hear Northumberland renown'd in arms :
Is there amongst us one who would incline
To measures of more caution ?

Sif. My dread leige,
Well hath Northumberland advised for battle ;

Of friends—of fame abandon'd be the man,
 Who checks the warrior's ardour and imposes
 Vile coward fears beneath the mask of caution.

Ed. I must confess my reason is not caught
 By empty sounds, nor can I give my voice
 For rash, intemperate and immediate battle :
 The foe, dread sir, is sixty thousand strong,
 By hardy warriors led and train'd to arms :
 Snatch your bright spears, cries bold Northumberland,
 And chace these wolves—Alas, these wolves have
 fangs,

And will not fly for words.

North. Now by my life,

Edwin, thy heart is not with England's cause.

Edg. Not with his country's cause I—Northumber-
 land,

Wert thou as great as pagan Hercules,
 And I no better than thyself, old man,
 Ev'n such a wither'd palsied thing as thou art,
 Yet would I tell thee to thy teeth 'tis false ;
 As wide as lowest hell stands off from heaven,
 So do thy words from truth.

Sif. Who talks of truth ?
 Where was your truth last night, when, like a spy,
 Darkling, alone, and as you hoped unseen,
 You leapt the trench and fled ?

Edg. Set out the lists—
 Life against life; and see if I can fly,
 Thou dastardly reviler.

Har. Peace ! and hear me :

Why hast thou left our camp? where and with whom
Didst thou consume the night?

Edg. Are there no hours,
Amidst a soldier's life sacred to love,
To friendship, to repose? I am no traitor—
Nor this my noble friend; let it suffice
I come a voluntary friend to claim
The privilege of my progenitors,
And die for England.

North. Perish he who would not!
This is the friend, my leige, of out-law'd Edgar,
Of whom report prevails that he now harbors
Somewhere within this realm; let him be question'd.

Har. Not for another empire. O Northumberland,
By gentle habits let us draw men's hearts,
And bind them to us not enforcedly,
But lovingly and freely—Hark, our trumpet!
Welcome, brave Reginald—what says the Norman
To our defiance?

Enter REGINALD.

Reg. Thus he bids me say,
To-morrow with the sun he will expect you
Army 'gainst army on the plains of Hastings.

Har. Hear ye this, lords? Oh turn upon the foe
Those eyes that interchange their angry fires.
Shall it be so, brave friends? What says Lord Ed-
mund?

Edg. There is my gage: To-morrow be our witness
Who ventures fairest in his country's cause,
Edmund or Siffic.

Ed. When we're call'd to arms
For England's safety, private feuds should cease,
And every son unite in her defence.

Har. Oh, let us bring one heart to this great cause;
Thus banded, who shall break us? To your posts
As friends and soldiers; let dissensions die,
Learn silence of the foe, and keep good watch.
So farewell all? — *Edmund.* [*Exeunt Lords.*]

Edg. What wills the King?

Har. Stand at my side: Would thou couldst love
me Edmund,

As well as thou lov'st Edgar: Why dost eye me
As thou wouldst measure me from heel to head?
I never did thee wrong: If thou hast sorrows,
Give them to me; I'm loaded hard with cares,
For I'm a King; thine is a private lot,
Thou may'st be free and happy. Gallant earl,
Will thou commit thy noble charge to me?
I would be private with him.

Ed. Royal sir,
The interest I have in him is thine:
Edmund remember——

Har. Follow me.

Ed. Beware. [*Exeunt Har. and Edg.*
[*As Edwin is going out, Waltheof who had waited in
the back scene, calls to him.*]

Wal. Turn, noble Edwin—look upon a friend.

Ed. A friend, Lord Waltheof?

Wal. Have you then forgot
How oft in early youth on Avon's banks

We wak'd the echoes with our rural sports?
Have you forgot our mutual binding oath
To royal Edgar's cause? Ev'n now my heart
True to its former fires, expanded swells
And labours with a second birth of love.

Ed. Where was your oath on that lamented day,
When Severn's streams ran purple with the blood
Of Edgar's murder'd friends? Where was your love,
When at the side of stern Northumberland
You frown'd defiance at me? Art thou not
The veriest courtier that e'er pag'd the heels
Of pride-sworn majesty?

Wal. Were I the wretch,
So supple to ambition's sordid use,
So abject as thou mak'st me, what forbids
But I should seize the lucky instant, fly
To the abus'd ear of the king and tell him—

Ed. What would'st thou tell him?

Wal. What! that Edmund is—
But for the world I will not damn my honour:
Live Edgar but 'till Waltheof shall betray him,
And he must be immortal.

Ed. Art thou faithful?
May I believe thee? Oh, if thou betray'st him
Hell hath not torments dire enough to plague thee.

Wal. Come, I am in thy bosom—Learn a truth;
This young Minerva, whom our English Jove
Leads to his wars—Matilda—shall be Edgar's.

Ed. Come to my heart; I do believe thee loyal
And noble as I've known thee.

Wal. Why she loves him

To fascination !

Ed. Art thou sure of that ?

Wal. Have I sight, hearing, do I live and wake ?

—Her very soul is Edmund's.

Ed. Grant she loves,

Can we be sure that he returns her love ?

Wal. Does the sun warm the bosom that he shines
on ?

So must her beauty Edgar : Mark my project—

The king to superstition much inclines ;

Peering in musty prophecies and fables ;

Consulting with astrologers and seers,

Diviners and interpreters of dreams,

Omens and prodigies.

Ed. 'Tis ever thus

When the mind's ill at ease.

Wal. There is at hand

An ancient soothsayer of Scottish birth,

Duncan his name ; ev'n such a man, so white

And reverend with age, as might impose

Credulity upon the wariest—him,

By the enthusiastic monarch deem'd

Oracular, will I dispose to speak

Of Edgar and his right—

Ed. Break off; behold

The princess comes.

Wal. Look, Edwin, what a form

Of pensive majesty ! Mark'd you that sigh ;

Those eyes, love's oracles ? Poor stricken deer,
The shaft is in thy heart !

Ed. Let us withdraw.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter MATILDA, and Attendants. A Guard.

Mat. Soldiers, retire ; your charge extends no farther—Sabina !

[*The Guard go.*]

Sab. What commands, my gracious lady ?

Mat. You told me on the way you had a suit ;
What can my faithful handmaids ask in vain ?

Sab. 'Tis for a stranger, not ourselves, we ask ;
A virgin suitor of no vulgar mein,
But fair in speech and feature, one who bears
The port and semblance of illustrious birth,
Tho' sorrow-struck and waining with despair.

Mat. Have you denied her aught ? ah, if you face.
Or have demur'd, me and yourself you've wrong'd
And forfeited Heav'n's love : What is her suit ?

Sab. In these rude times protection and admission
Into our happy number.

Mat. Bring her to me.

[*Exeunt all but S. B.*]

Sabina, stay ; there's pity in thine eye,
If this poor stranger can provoke these drops,
My griefs will drown thee quite.

Sab. Alas, what would'st thou ?

Mat. What would I ? be the poorest thing on earth,
Poorer than her whose miseries you weep for,
Be any thing so I were free withall :
Then might I see him, wait upon him, watch
And pay him hourly worship. On our way

As I did meet the king, and bent my knee,
As is my morning custom—why, Sabina,
When I discover'd standing at my side
Young Edmund's bright and blooming form before
me,

Why did my heart, as with a sudden leap,
Spring to my trembling lips and stop my tongue,
That would have beg'd a blessing? Every sense
Revolted from it's office; my 'rapt soul
Fled at my eyes; I fainted, sunk and fell.

Sab. Ah fatal chance, that ever you should see him!

Mat. Deeper and deeper sinks the mortal shaft;
My bosom's peace is lost. Once I was happy;
Clear and serene my life's calm current ran,
While scarce a breezy wish provok'd its tide;
Down the smooth flood the tuneful passions fell
In easy lapse and slumber'd as they pass'd.
Now what a change is wrought! O love, in age
'Thou art indeed a child, in power a god.
How now!—What stranger's this?

*Enter EDWINA, introduced by the Ladies of MATILDA's
Train.*

Sab. You have forgot,
The maid we spoke of.

Mat. Pray you pardon me—
Stranger, approach and fear not. I can see
Thou art not us'd to ask, and yet thy looks
Plead most enforcingly: If thou dost need
Such shelter as these humble coverings give,

Here in the rear of danger thou may'st dwell,
And join thy prayer to ours.

Edw. Thanks, noble lady.

In yon' fair vale, while peace was there, I dwelt:
One only brother cheer'd my orphan state,
And rich in flocks and herds, serene we liv'd
Him, the support and solace of my life,
Stern duty's iron hand hath wrested from me,
And somewhere in this mighty camp he wars.
What was for me deserted and forlorn?
With one old faithful servant forth I came
Led slowly on thro' unfrequented paths
To her, whose fame is bruited thro' the land,
Whose gentleness and pity climb Heav'n's court,
Like an accepted sacrifice.

Mat. No more.

Praise undeserv'd, what is it but reproach?
(This maid would seem less noble than she is) [*Aside.*]
How must I call thee, stranger?

Edw. Athelina.

O Heavenly God of truth, be not extreme
With thine offending creature, but accept
Necessity my plea.

[*Aside.*]

Mat. Fair Athelina,

Such welcome as these angry times allow,
Freely thou hast: Ours is no life of ease;
We must awake before the morning dawn,
Or look to have our slumber broke to-morrow.
When these vast armies which thou see'st shall join,
Rending Heav'n's concave with their rival shouts
In terrible confision—

Edw. Power supremel
Whose words can bid the gath'ring clouds disperse,
And chain the stubborn and contentious winds,
When they unseat the everlasting rocks
And cast them to the sky, wilt thou permit
Thy creature man thus to deface thy works?
Or is he stronger and in less controul
Than these fierce elements?

Mat. Banish complaint,
Take hope into thy heart, and every thought
Drive far away, that can infect the mind
With fear's unnerved ague. 'Tis the cause,
The cause, which sanctifies the warrior's zeal;
It is our country's just maternal claim
On all her sons to fight in her defence.

Edw. I will not whisper to the babbling winds
My ill-tim'd fears, but hush them in my breast,
And smile on sorrow, tho' my sad heart break.

Mat. Ah, am not I a woman like thyself?
Doth thy heart tremble for a brother's life,
And shall a father's plant no care in mine?
What hast thou more at stake, unless perchance
Thy flock and herds in yon' sequester'd vale,
Thy peaceful calm content outweighs a crown.

Edw. Ah, Edmund, Edmund! why did'st thou
forsake me?

Mat. Whom dost thou name?

Edw. I pray you pardon me,
The sad remembrance of an absent friend
Drew after it a short unheeded sigh,
The last which I will utter.

Mat. Much I fear

Thou hast untold afflictions—secret griefs,
Which swell that bosom and provoke those sighs.
But, come, thy tender frame demands repose,
And these kind friends will lead thee to their tents.
To-morrow, virgins, we must teach our throats
A loftier strain, and to the sounding harp
With songs of victory hail the rising morn. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT III. SCENE I.

Scene as before. Enter EDWIN and WALTHEOF.

Waltheof.

Lo, he hath dropt the curtain of his tent,
Which tokens privacy: Duncan is there;
I have arm'd the fiery zealot for the charge
With all the stars of Heaven at his command,
To rouse the sleeping conscience of the king:
That done, my turn succeeds to mount the breach
Where superstition enter'd, 'whelm his soul
With Edgar's wrongs; and then 'twixt hope and fear
Fix this fair project.

Ed. Oh beware, Lord Waltheof!—
In Edgar's veins runs the last hallow'd stream
Of royal Alfred's blood.

Wal. What can defeat us?
Matilda's passion makes our purpose sure;
And for the king—but hark, he's coming forth—

[*Exeunt.*]

DUNCAN comes hastily out of the Tent, followed by
HAROLD.

Har. Stay, Duncan, stay!

Dun. Let me come forth.

Har. Oh, speak,

Oh answer me this once, prophetic seer!

Shall we go forth and conquer?

Dun. Man of sin,

Conquer thyself, take arms against ambition,

Drive that invader from thy heart, then talk

Of setting England free.

Har. What is my sin?

Dun. And dost thou ask? was it a trivial thing

From this fair vineyard to thrust out the heir,

And rule by spoil and rapine?

Har. I have sinn'd;

Yet I've not slain him; still young Edgar lives.

Dun. Lives he and dost thou reign?—Tho' thou
shouldst bribe

Legions of holy men to weary Heaven

Early and late with never-ceasing prayers,

Vain were their suit. Now mark me—All night long

From setting to the rising sun I watch'd,

And on my aged knees put up loud prayers

And frequent, for this helpless country's sake—

Har. Heav'n grant thy prayers! say, what declare
the signs?

Dun. Ev'n in that moment when the midnight sphere

Central was pois'd, and yesterday expir'd,

On the left shoulder of the northern bear

Thy natal star arose ! rayless and dim
 And watery pale the horoscope appear'd,
 While from the threat'ning east the hostile Moon
 Push'd thee with adverse horns, red-mail'd Mars
 Flam'd in his planetary house, and scoul'd
 With steller rage askaunt.

Har. Disastrous signs !
 What shall I do ?

Dun. Repent !

Har. With heart abash'd
 And low as to the dust I bow my head
 To Heav'n's rebuke and thine—What more ? Oh
 speak !

Dun. Fight not till Edgar's found—

Har. Till Edgar's found ?
 But when and where ?—proceed.

Dun. Thou hast a daughter—
 I can no more : Who follows shall expound ;
 What he shall counsel, that pursue and prosper !
[Exit Dun.]

Har. [Alone.] ' Fight not till Edgar's found !'—So
 much is perfect :

' Thou hast a daughter'—there the prophet ceas'd :
 ' Who follows shall expound'—Thus I am left !
 This is thy fruit, Ambition ; thus it seems
 Possessions by ill deeds obtain'd, by worse
 Must be upheld or lost ; such league and concord
 Things vicious hold, that trespassing in one,
 We must offend in all ; woe then to him,
 Who from his neighbour's heap purloins a grain.

Yea but one grain ; with such swift consequence
Crime follows crime, that none shall dare to say,
This and no more !

Enter WALTHEOF unobserved by HAROLD.

Wal. Thus Israel's monarch stood.

With eyes so wedded to the pensive earth,
When at the fable's close his conscience smote him,
While the stern messenger of God pronounc'd,
Thou art the man !

Har. Waltheof !

Wal. What would my liege ?

Har. Approach, in truth thou'rt welcome. I have
seen

The old divining hermit, whom we met
Upon the eve of Standford's bloody day,
When Halfager with his Norwegian bands,
And traitrous Tosti fell beneath our swords.

Wal. And gives he victory still ?

Har. Atonement now.

Is all his theme, and penitence for wrongs
To Edgar done.

Wal. Hence with such idle dreamers !

What are the visions of the cloyster'd monk,
The hermit's phrenzy, or the coward calls
Of blackning Conscience to ambition's charms ?

Har. Ambition's charms ! Accursed be the hour
When first they caught my weak unwary heart !
Full in my view the stately phantom stood,
Her stature charm'd me and the dazzling height

Fir'd my young blood ! I sprung to her embrace ;
The distance vanish'd and the steep ascent
Sunk at the touch ; she with dissembling smiles
And meretricious glances met my joys ;
Upon my head she plac'd a kingly crown ;
But in the moment drew a poniard forth,
And plung'd it in my heart.

Wal. Ah ! who shall envy
Another's greatness ; call another blest,
When thus a king complains ?

Har. I tell thee, Waltheof,
Had I the world at will, I'd yield it up
To be at peace with Heaven.

Wal. Alas, my liege !
Are there no gentler terms of peace with Heaven ?
Methinks—but I offend perhaps and press
On too high matters—

Har. I conjure thee speak :
My doom is on thy lips ; 'tis thou alone
That can expound my fate.

Wal. Wouldst thou atone
For wrongs to Edgar done, and purge thy soul
For it's contracted guilt—thou hast—

Har. Proceed—
Nor rack me with suspense.

Wal. Thou hast a daughter—

Har. What follows ! there the prophet ceas'd—
proceed.

Wal. And need I add the rest ? Edgar—Matilda—
How those soft names unite ! there's music in them,
Might make the angriest star in Heaven propitious.

Har. Join them? espouse them?—is it thus you counsel?

Wal. If thus it please thee; think it else a sound,
Which dies and is forgot.

Har. Come to my bosom;
Thy voice to me is as the voice of Heaven:
It shall be so; Edgar shall wed Matilda;
My darling child sure will obey and bless me.
Men's hearts shall be mine own; these factious lords
Will all come in—

Wal. Duncan shall chide no more—

Har. My country shall be sav'd—but where is Edgar?
Now by the virgin mother of our Lord,
A bow shall not be bent against the foe,
Nor a stone vollied from the slinger's arm
'Till Edgar shall be found.

Wal. Then ere the star
Of evening shall arise, expect him here.

Har. May I believe thee?

Wal. If I bring him not,
Let my head answer.

Har. I am whole again:
Now I have divination on my side;
Fight not, the prophet cried, 'till Edgar's found.
Lo! he is found, I may both fight and conquer.
O Waltheof, I do surely think that God
To wise and holy men sometimes reveals
A portion of his councils: Here we part—
I to Matilda; you in search of Edgar;
Whom if you bring, I live but to reward you. [*Exit.*

Wal [*Alone.*] Thus do I ever make all men mine own,
And still conforming to these changeful times,
Like ancient Janus double-fac'd, at once
Follow the setting—meet the rising sun.

Enter EDWIN.

Welcome, brave lord, rais'd by the fairest hand
In England's isle your prince ascends the throne :
Harold by Duncan's holy art prepar'd
With greedy joy adopts the royal youth.

Ed. Thanks, powerful superstition ; this atones
For all the mischief thou hast wrought on earth !

Wal. Now in this awful interim, whilst dread
And trembling expectation hangs on all,
O let us bring the light of England forth !
So shines the day-star out, after rude storms
Have shook the palsied night, and high in air
Hangs forth his glittering lamp to cheer the world,
At sight whereof the guilty waves subside,
And the vext spirits of the deep disperse.

Ed. Wouldst thou disclose the prince ?

Wal. Else all is lost :

Vain is our hopes, our reconciliation void,
The battle's lost, and England is no more.

Ed. Let me reflect—Suppose that I reveal'd
His passion for Edwina—

[*Aside.*]

Wal. Doubt not, Edwin,
Nor for an empty scruple cast away
The sacred moments, upon which depends
All that is dear, our king's, our country's fate,
Fame, virtue, freedom, all that we esteem
Beneath the skies, all we expect above.

Ed. Go. To thy charge, O Waltheof, I commit
The fate of Edgar and of England; Go!
Yet stay—resolve me, hast thou weigh'd the danger?
Hast thou with wary eye look'd thro' the heart
Of this ambitious man? Art thou right, sure
There's no dissimulation lurking there?
Swear to me this, as thou hast hope in Heaven,
And I will yield the prince.

Wal. So Heaven to me
It's loving mercy deal, as I believe
In very truth there's not on earth that thing
Of Harold so desir'd, as this alliance.

Ed. Go then ere I recall the word, begone!
Tell the usurper—but thy own discretion
Will tutor thee more wisely.—Hence! 'tis past.
[Exit Wal.]

Enter EDGAR hastily.

Edg. Edwin, thou 'st been conferring with Lord
Waltheof;
That man hath eyes which penetrate the heart;
And he of all our English nobles here
Knows me for Edgar; make him then thine own;
Print on his lips the seal of holy faith,
Keep my name sacred as Heav'n's own records
Lock'd in thy breast.

Ed. Prince, dost thou love thy country?
Wouldst thou preserve her matrons from dishonor,
Her youth from slavish bonds, and chace the spoilers
From her affrighted shore?

Edg. Would I!—just Heaven
Thou know'st what I have done, and thou can'st tell
What more that spirit thou hast given would do!

Ed. Nay, 'tis no irksome task. No toil, no danger,
But joy and love and glory crown the deed.

Edg. No more, but to the point.

Ed. In one plain word

Thus then I open all thy fate—Matilda!—
Nay, start not, sir—thy tried and loving servant,
Edwin, thy ever faithful creature tells thee
That thou must wed Matilda.

Edg. Hah! must wed!
What if I love her not?

Ed. All men must love her.

Edg. Must wed! must love! Away! Did the great
master

Put in thy hands those fine and secret springs,
Which guide the various movements of the soul?
Rouse it to hate, or melt it into love?
No: there is that in every human breast,
Which Heaven made free and tyrants cannot reach.

Ed. Wilt thou not meet the hand that lifts thee up
From low despair and seats thee on a throne?

Edg. Perish ambition! perish every hope
Rather than this should be!

Ed. Go then, ye sons
Of freedom, go! your sacred birthright sell
To Norman masters; hence like scatter'd sheep
Without a shepherd—for there's none to watch
But hirelings; he, the master of the flock,
Shrinks from his duty and forsakes the fold.

Edg. Edwin, this patriot rage becomes thee well;
But let me glory in my choice, the crown—
Nay, was it mine, the world would be Edwina's :
And know, I 'd rather be the roving kern,
That prints Arabia's sands with burning feet,
And send my heart amidst the tawny tribes
To fix where love should point, than be a king
To wed as sordid policy prescribes. [Exit.

Ed. [*Alone.*] Death to my hopes, he has no soul
for empire.

Heavens! that a man born for a nation's glory,
Can sell his birthright at so vile a price,
For such a toy as beauty!—O, Edwina!
(And must I call thee sister?) fatal syren,
Thou hast done this : if Waltheof sees the king
Edgar is lost; that, that must be prevented
With my best speed, for oh! I love him still,
Still my heart tells me I would die to save him.

[Exit.

Enter MATILDA and EDWINA.

Mat. A little farther yet—I see you wonder
Why I have brought you to this place apart :
It is because a sympathy of soul
Draws and unites me to you ; 'tis because
There sits a weeping cherub in your eyes,
That silently demands why I am sad,
And I must speak to it : The worldly-wise,
Who slowly climb by cold degrees to friendship,
Such are my scorn ; at sight of Athelina

Affection from my breast sprung forth at once
Mature as Pallas from the brain of Jove.

Edw. Your bounty, like the sun, warms where it
shines,

And what it feels, inspires.

Mat. O Athelina,

I am ordain'd to misery, soul-enslav'd
And sentenc'd sore against the heart's protest
To wed and be a wretch.

Edw. And who compels

Matilda! victim-like, what tyrant drags thee
As to a pagan altar; there to offer
Constrain'd obeisance, and put on the vow
As slaves do fetters with an aching heart?

Mat. So wills my father; never till this hour
Did I behold him so possess'd with passion,
So terrible in wrath.

Edw. O shame to nature!

And what is he 'mongst Europe's kings so great,
That you of force must wed?

Mat. Nor great is he,

Nor number'd amongst Europe's kings, but one,
Of whose inheritance there is not left,
Save the free air he breathes, and one faint spark
Of sickly hope, that visits his sad heart
To rack 't with recollection of lost right.

Edw. What do I hear!

Mat. Nay thou can'st never guess him;
The last, the lowest in thy thoughts—

Edw. Indeed!

Mat. To sum up my afflictions in a word,
'Tis Edgar Atheling.

Edw. Heavens grace forbid it !
Have they discover'd him ?

Mat. Who ! what's discover'd ?

Edw. Perish the meddling politic contriver,
Who set this mischief going !—Oh, if Edgar—

Mat. Who talks, who thinks of Edgar ? Thou 'rt
possest.

Edw. Who can be patient and yet hear such things ?
The king commands ! what then ? will he command
The soul and its affections ? Dearest lady,
Your father though he be, is he so great
As to give law to nature ?

Mat. I am fixt :
Therefore be patient ? had he ask'd my life,
I would obey and grant it ; but my heart
That is another's—I cannot bestow
What I do not possess.

Edw. Then you 'll not wed—

Mat. To Edgar never, be assur'd of that.

Edw. Oh 'tis a deed will chronicle your name
In fame's eternal records ; you disdain
To make a lying contract with your lips
And swerve with your affections ; you are fixt ;
You love another : oh, may he you love—
Kneeling I make it my most ardent prayer
Be your reward and glory ; live for you,
And you alone ; and may you meet delights,
Pure as your virtue, lasting as your truth !

Mat. Kind Athelina, thanks: bear with my weakness,

And let me tell thee all my love's fond story
From the first hour I met him; the bright sun,
Smote on his helm, which shot a fiery gleam,
That dazzled all the plain; before his troop,
Arm'd at all points, upon a snow-white steed
Graceful he rode; invention never yok'd
A fairer courser to Apollo's car,
When with the zephyrs and the rosy hours
Through heaven's bright portal he ascends the east,
And on his beamy forehead brings the morn.

Edw. A snow-white steed! New terrors strike my soul. [*Aside.*]

Mat. At sight of me he stopt, and from his steed
Active and feathery-light he leapt to earth.

Edw. Give me your pardon; serves he in this camp?

Mat. Yes, but report prevails, he left the camp
Last night o' th' sudden; and this morn, 'tis said,
Being return'd, in presence of the king,
Some proud high-stomach'd lords did sharply urge
And whet him to much rage; him and his friend
Earl Edwin.—

Edw. Hah! 'tis he.

[*Aside.*]

Mat. Alas, what shakes you!
You start and tremble, and your up-cast eyes
Cling to heaven's throne: know you the youth I
speak of?

Edw. As yet you have not told his name.

Mat. 'Tis Edmund.

Edw. I had a friend and Edmund was his name,
But now that name's no more !

Mat. You had a friend—

I knew it, Athelina ; yès I saw,
I saw your sorrows and I lov'd you for them ;
Your friend is now no more—Alas ! To-morrow
May lay my Edmund low as your's ; but I,
I shall not live, as thou hast liv'd, to tell it.
Oh, were he Edgar, had he Edgar's birth,
My young, unknown, untitled, blooming rustic,
Did his blood flow—but what of that ? My father
Reigns though a subject born, and so shall Edmund,
If virtue hath an interest in heaven ;
And England's throne out-stands to-morrow's storm.

Edw. Indeed !

Mat. No power can stir me.

Edw. What if Edmund,

What if the youth you love perchance hath made
Some humbler fair his choice—

Mat. Perish the thought,

It brings distraction with it : I command you
Not to suppose he can prefer another ;
I took you for my comforter, and lo
You fix a scorpion to my breast.

Edw. A scorpion !

I pray you be not angry ; I would kneel
And beg a blessing for you ; but, alas !
Leaden affliction lies so heavy on me,

Imagination cannot stretch a wing
To raise me from the dust.

Mat. Nay, now you melt me ;
Pr'ythee go in, good maid, I am right sorry
I spake so harshly to you : do not weep,
For my sake do not—yet 'tis ever thus,
When the fond thought of some departed friend
Bursts unawares from memory's gushing font,
And in a flood of sorrows 'whelms the soul.

[*Excunt.*

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Enter EDWIN and WALTHEOF.

Edwin.

LORD Waltheof, if thou has not yet disclos'd
The royal youth, forbear, I do revoke
The word I gave thee.—

Wal. Why, on what pretence ?

Ed. Edgar commands it ; he disclaims ambition
And will not wed Matilda.

Wal. Will not wed !—

Edgar, the most forlorn, lost thing on earth,
Not wed Matilda ! Strengthen my belief,
Some wonder working power ! It cannot be.

Ed. By Heaven that knows my heart, I have assail'd
him

With words, tears, menaces, entreaties, prayers;
But all, all fruitless : he is fixt.

Wal. For shame !
Some little grov'ling passion lurks about him,
Some vulgar village wench, whose ruddy health
And rustic manners fit his narrow soul,
And kindle something he mistakes for love.

Ed. Restrain yourself, my lord, your rage transports you,
And yet to show I scorn a mean disguise,
I own, in bitterness of soul I own it,
Your charge in part is true ; there is a maid,
But not of low degree, whom Edgar loves,
Fatally loves, but not of rustic manners,
Or name ignoble.

Wal. Whosoe'er she be,
Evil betide her beauty ! she hath poison'd
The dearest hopes of a most blessed creature ;
Accursed as she is, she hath undone
The happiness of one, with whom compar'd
She were an æthiop.

Ed. Peace, unholy railer,
You know not whom you curse—she is my sister.

Wal. Thy sister ! Ah, is this well done, my lord ?
Thus am I us'd ? thus like your basest lacquey,
Call'd and recall'd and fool'd at pleasure ? death !
I stand for Harold ; him I serve ; if Edgar
Fondly prefers thy sister to the crown
Of England and Matilda, be it so ;

Let Edgar so declare it to the king,
I shall fulfil my promise.

Ed. How, betrayer!

You pass no more this way but through my guard.
You stand for Harold, and for justice I,

[Draws his sword.]

For suffering innocence, for truth and Edgar.

Wal. No more; put up your sword; the king advances

Thus to be found were death to both. *[Exit.]*

Ed. Away!

It is my cause that conquers, not my sword. *[Exit.]*

Enter HAROLD, followed by EDGAR.

Har. Now if indeed thou art that loving friend
Of Edgar Atheling, which fame reports thee,
Lend me thy patient ear. Thou 'rt not to learn,
How, when his grandsire good king Edmund died,
Our English nobles put him from his right:
And me a subject born, earl Goodwyn's son,
Call'd to the vacant throne; so call'd, of force
Obey'd I them, and by a king's best title,
My subjects free election, took the crown.

Edg. And took you peace withal and fair content
And conscious rectitude? You took the crown!
So would not I, though it had brought dominion
Wide as the world. Have you sweet sleep at nights?
Do no ill-omen'd visions haunt your couch;
And smile the eyelids of the morn upon you,
When you salute the light?

Har. Urge me no further :

I see thou'rt noble, and that manly plainness,
Which some would shrink from, knits me closer to
thee :

Nay I will own thou hast call'd up a thought,
Which like unweildy armour weighs me down.
I do perceive shame and remorse are handmaids,
That wait on guilt as darkness on the night.

Edg. Methinks there needs no oracle for this ;
To tell me man is cruel, false, ambitious,
Full of gross appetency and unjust,
Is to say man is man—a general truth,
To which your meanest centinel shall witness
As amply as myself : call in your camp,
Our conference needs no privacy ; you say
Heaven goads the guilty breast, and well you say,
For goad it shall, or heaven must not be heaven.

Har. Give me thy patience : what thou yet hast
heard,

Think but the prelude to more weighty matter.
I have a daughter—need I call her fair,
Virtuous and full of grace ?—my realm's sole heiress.
Her, in respect of his descended right,
Though fortune-wreck'd and bankrupt ev'n in hope,
Edgar shall wed.

Edg. Shall wed ?

Har. Hah ! dost thou pause ?

Edg. No, if affection moves at thy command,
And love must follow where ambition points,
Edgar shall wed Matilda.

Har. This to me ?

Edg. But if love owns no law but of the heart ;
And if perchance some humbler maid hath drawn
Such vows from Edgar's lips, as honour frames
And fond believing innocence admits,
Then——

Har. What then ?

Edg. Not upon the peopled earth,
No, nor above the clouds resides that power,
Can wrench the conscious witness from his heart,
And say to Edgar he shall wed Matilda.

Har. What, shall a needy outlaw talk of love ?
A beggar plead affections and reject
Her, to whom Europe's kings have knelt in vain ?

Edg. Yes, for since beggars have aspir'd to crowns,
Kings have declin'd to beggars.

Har. Hence, audacious,
Nor feign for Edgar ; what were Edgar present
And known, he dare not for his life avow.

Edg. Know then 'tis Edgar speaks, 'tis Atheling
Rejects you offer'd terms ; which scorn rejects them,

Har. Thou Edgar !

Edg. I am Edgar.

Har. Guards !—arrest him. [*Guards advance.*

Yet stay ; a moment's pause : let me be calm ;
Collect thy scatter'd thoughts ; we yet are friends.

Edg. No, when I league with guilt and yield to fear
What honour should withhold, heav'n shall meet hell,
Things the most fierce and opposite in nature
Shall start from their extremes and band together,

Fly to thy guards, defenceless and embay'd,
With only truth and justice on my side,
Both naked, both unarm'd, I do defy thee.

Har. Dost thou defy me ? take back thy defiance,
With death to better it.

[Gives a signal for the guards to arrest him.]

Enter MATILDA hastily.

Mat. Health to my father !
Why dart thine eyes such angry lightnings forth ?
Why stand these guards like hounds upon the slip ?
Is this their victim ? ah ! can he offend ?
Never look'd guilt like him ; he errs perhaps
And with too bold a speech affronts the ear
Of majesty ; a stranger is not bound
To all a subject's forms ; let me prevail ;
Send him aside and hear thy daughter speak.

Har. My daughter shall be heard ; is there a thing
I ever yet denied thee ? Lead him off,
And wait our pleasure.—Hah ! that look hath lan-
guage.

[The Guard leads off Edgar : Matilda looks tenderly at him.]

Matilda, know'st thou him thou dost survey
With such fond scrutiny ?

Mat. You bade me know him,
Protect and cherish ; by his youthful graces
Conquer'd yourself, you turn'd them upon me :
And now what cause, alas ! provokes this change ?

Har. Thou art the cause ; 'tis for thy sake he dies.

Mat. Die for my sake ! Not if his death could add
Myriads of years to my extended life,
And every year bring myriads of delights.

Har. These are impassion'd words : alas, my child,
If thou dost love this youth—

Mat. Thou wilt destroy him ;
It is the savage policy of kings.

Har. Thou lov'st him then—confess.

Mat. To desperation—to death.

Har. Then Heaven cannot afflict thee deeper.

Mat. I know it, but your daughter, sir, can die :
I speak for nature ; mine is not a heart,
That can transfer affection ; tear him hence,
You tear life too, there is no room for Edgar.

Har. Say'st thou for Edgar ? He, that youth is
Edgar.

Mat. [*Har. catches her, as she is falling, in his arms.*
After a pause she proceeds.]

Save me, support me : O my much-loved father,
If he, that youth be Edgar, wouldst thou kill
Him that shall be my husband.

Har. What but killing
Merits that monster, who rejects Matilda ?

Mat. Rejects Matilda ! Am I then rejected ?
Oh that some friend had plung'd a dagger here,
Ere I had met this moment !

Har. Nay, be patient.

Mat. Let me behold him and I will be patient.
Was thine ear fearful ? Did no wrongs provoke him ?
I found thee high in wrath, he too was angry,

He was, he was; and spake he knew not what.

Har. Grant Heav'n he did! I am no practised suitor,
And undeserv'd misfortune makes men proud.

Hoa, guards!—produce the youth you have in charge.

May he who arm'd thine eyes, inspire thy lips!

See where he comes——

[*Exit Har.*]

Enter EDGAR, guarded.

Mat. Prince, (so I now must call you)
If, while it pleas'd you to assume the name
And simple stile of a plain Scottish knight,
Friendship for Edmund caus'd me to omit
What Edgar's high pretensions might have claim'd,
I shall expect your pardon.

Edg. Take my thanks,
For they are much thy due.

Mat. Nay I am told
You are too proud to be Matilda's debtor,
Crowns, by her hand presented, you reject
And scorn the encumber'd boon: vindictive Edgar,
Is it your sport to steal away our hearts,
Like heathen Jove, beneath a borrow'd form,
Then re-assume the god, ascend your skies,
And leave the slighted maid to die with weeping?

Edg. What shall I say? that I disclaim ambition?
That long estrang'd and exil'd from my realm,
My heart forgets its home and draws no sighs,
Which point to England and my native right?
Or with an eye of cold philosophy
Shall I affect to view that radiant form,

And not confess its charms? I feel their power,
But cannot give that heart which is another's.

Mat. Another's! where, in what proud realm is
found

She, from whose sight diminish'd rivals shrink,
And leave the choice of all mankind to her?

Edg. In rural silence dwells the maid I love,
With her in some lone corner of your isle,
Far from ambition's walk, let me reside,
Nor shake the quiet of Matilda's soul.

Mat. Sure of all forms, which cruelty assumes,
Humility can most insult mankind:

Away! nor cheat me with these fairy scenes;
There is no beauty in our isle for Edgar,
No soft sequester'd maid, no truth, no love,
Save what this fond rejected heart contains.

Edg. Thus urg'd, 'twere meanness to withhold the
truth:

In Hackley's shades a Sylvan goddess holds
Her lonely haunts; Edwina is her name;
Earl Edwin's sister—

Mat. Take her, and be still
That abject thing thou art; take Edwin's sister,
A subject beauty fits a subject's choice.
Go to my father, tell him thou hast pierc'd
His daughter's heart, and give him stab for stab:
Away, away! thou hast thy full revenge.

Edg. Revenge! my heart disclaims it: O Matilda!
My prayers—I can no more—farewel for ever! [*Exit.*

[*As Edgar is parting from Matilda, Edwina enters.*

Edw. 'Tis Edgar!—Hah! he parts and sees me not.

Mat. Stay, Athelina, turn, beloved maid,
Turn from that monster thine abhorrent eyes;
Approach and save me!

Edw. What afflicts Matilda?

Mat. And is there need of words? break, break,
my heart!

Open thou prison-house of the soul, dissolve
And give a wretched captive it's release!

Edw. Be calm.

Mat. As death. Why look'd you on that youth?

Edw. I look'd not on his face.

Mat. And if thou had'st,
If thou had'st look'd, thou wouldst have lov'd like me,
And like me been a wretch!

Edw. Alas, I pity thee.

Mat. Then thou hast lov'd, for love will teach thee
pity.

Could'st thou believe it, he, (O, heaven!) that Ed-
mund,

Whose very name's a lye; that Edgar Atheling

For Edwin's sister slights, rejects Matilda;

A princess for a clown; me for Edwina!

Strike her smooth form all o'er with lep'rous blanes,

Ye sprites, which magic incantations charm!

Shake her with palsied ugliness, ye demons,

And so present her to her lover's arms

To kill him with the touch.—O Athelina,

If thou dost love me join and aid the curse!

Edw. Shall I curse her, who never hath offended?

Mat. Turn then on him thy deepest, direct curse ;
Call up the damn'd, and darken heaven with spells.

Edw. Mercy forbid !

Mat. No mercy, but revenge :
Give me revenge. He dies.

Edw. Ah take my life :
Lo, at thy feet a wretched virgin kneels
And prays for mercy.

Mat. Hence ! you'll anger me.

Edw. I would I could : turn thy revenge on me ;
But spare my Edgar's life.

Mat. Thy Edgar say'st thou ?
Who and what art thou ? Speak.

Edw. I am Edwina.

Mat. What do I hear ? thou art—

Edw. I am Edwina :

Here is that bosom thou would'st plant with sores
And spotted leprosy, that fatal form,
Which thou would'st rouse the demons up from hell,
To strike with palsied ugliness ; behold !—

I am the wretch whom thou didst cail to aid
Thy curse on Edgar : mark how I will curse him.

O all ye saints and angels, every spirit [*Kneeling.*
Who wing'st this nether air with pinions dip
In heaven's ethereal dew, make him your care,
And, gathering o'er his head your plumed band,
From a celestial canopy above him
To fence off this destroyer !

Mat. Peace, deceiver :
Thy prayers are vain ; he dies this moment.— [*Going.*

Edw. Stay!

Tho' not in pity, yet in honour hear me :
 I ask no mercy ; prayers indeed are vain ;
 Edwina pleads not ev'n Edgar's life :
 For if when I, the fatal cause of all,
 Lie at thy feet a bloody breathless corse,
 Thy rage should still demand his guiltless life,
 Who shall oppose it ? All that I shall do,
 All that I can, is thus—to die for Edgar.

[Offers to kill herself, but is prevented by Matilda.]

Mat. Stop thy rash hand ; thou shalt not die. This
 courage

Dazzles my rage ; I stiffen with surprise ;
 Thy presence, like the fascinating eye
 Of the fixt basilisk, takes motion from me
 And roots me in the earth——

Edw. What shall I say ?

I own thee wretched and myself the cause :
 But do not let remorseless fury rend
 The god from out thine heart, which nature's hand
 Set up, as in a shrine of human kindness,
 That misery like mine might find a shelter.

Mat. No more ; I once had pity ; the poor bird,
 Which kills herself to feed her gaping brood,
 Was not more pitiful ; but it is past ;
 The wolf hath slain the lamb ; bloody revenge
 Hath thrust out all remorse—I must have vengeance.

Edw. Take it ; 'tis in thine hand——Take full re-
 venge :

Thou hast a dagger, strike to Edgar's heart ;

Lay his lov'd form a breathless corse before thee,
And sate thy thirst for vengeance.—Hah! 'tis past—
Heaven opens in thine eyes.

Mat. 'Tis in mine heart :

I feel its breath, like dew, descend upon me ;
Amidst the whirl of passion mercy sits,
And whispers patience in a voice so charming,
To hear is to obey——Thy Edgar lives.

Edw. Lives he? May angels waft the word to
heaven,

And bring a blessing thence !

Mat. Stay not to thank me,
Bear from my sight that too-engaging form :
Leave me to my afflictions, they'll stay with me,
And be my close companions——Fare thee well !

Edw. Farewell, thou suffering virtue! Oh, re-
member,

Remember Edgar——

[*Exit Edw.*]

Mat. Whither was I sinking
When this bright deed restor'd me! So the wretch
With felon steps, on murderous att intent,
Steals on the sleeping night ; when if at once
Launch'd from sulphureous clouds the vollied fires
Quick-glancing burst upon his ruffian head
With dazzling bright suffusion, horror-seiz'd,
Trembling, aghast he starts, lets fall the knife
Ev'n at the victim's throat and flies—as I do.

Exit.

ACT V. SCENE I.

HAROLD is discovered in his Tent before break of Day;
the Guards in various Attitudes resting on their Arms:
he rises from his Couch and advances.

Harold.

WHEN will this night have end? Arise, break forth;
I'm weary of invoking thee, O sun!
Lo, in you red'ning cloud I see thee mount;
Not as thou 'rt wont with odour-breathing gales,
Serene and marshall'd by the dancing hours
Up to the laughing east; but warrior-like
With rattling quiver and loud stormy march
And bloody ensigns by the furies rear'd
Aloft and floating in the flecker'd sky:
So shall the day be suited to it's deeds. [*A Trumpet.*
Stand to your arms there, soldiers! Up, awake!
[*The Guards rise.*

Enter Earl of MERCIA.

Mer. Hail to my king and brother! on my knee
I beg a boon.

Har. What is it, gallant Mercia?

Mer. The leading of the Kentishmen.

Har. 'Tis thine:

Draw the firm phalanx forth; 'tis thine to guide
The thunder of the war: there be thy post.

Farewell! The word is victory or death. [*Exit Mer.*
[*He speaks to one of the Guard.*

Come hither, soldier! haste thou to Lord Reginald,
Bid him to plant his bowmen in the copse,
Which flanks the Norman camp; he knows the place;
Thence as our foes advance with level front
And regulated files, he may perplex
And gall their battle.—Take this ensign, soldier,
In Standford's fight I saw thee bravely win it,
Defend it now as bravely.

Sol. With my life.

[*Exit Soldier.*]

Enter WALTHEOF.

Wal. Health and a happy morn to England's king!
Would Heav'n, that all our warriors like their chief
Had thus outstript the sun!

Har. Where is the promise,
With which so high you fed my pamper'd hope?
Edgar rejects my suit: no power can move him.

Wal. Alas, you are too mild.

Har. He's deaf to reason.

Wal. Be deaf to him, O Heaven, when he does kneel
And cry for mercy! Put your terrors forth,
My life upon 't he yields.

Har. Set him before us.

[*Exit Wal.*]

Enter EDGAR, guarded.

Edg. Your messenger conven'd me to your tent;
Lo, I expect your pleasure.

Har. Mark me then,
While to thy free election I hold up
Two different mirrors: in the one you see

The fair presentment of a kingly crown,
Where love and beauty weave the nuptial knot,
That binds it to thy brow ; in plainer terms,
My daughter and my empire wait thy choice.

Edg. I have a vow noted in Heaven's own volume,
Where saints have witness'd it.

Har. Oh seize the moment !
If you espouse my daughter I go forth
To certain conquest : from my soul I think
That England's fate now hangs on thy resolve.
Heal then the breaches of the land, my son,
And make us all one heart. Come then, ye nations,
And shroud old Ocean with your hostile sails ;
By her own sons defended and belov'd,
England shall stand unshaken and secure,
And only fall, when time itself expires.

Edg. Bid me go forth ; conduct me to the charge :
Plant me upon the last, forlornest hope,
Where the fight burns, where the mad furies toss
Their flaming torches, and wide-wasting death
Up to the ribs in blood, with giant stroke
Widows the nations : thither let me go
To fight, to fall ; but never dare to hope
Tho' you 'd a Seraph's eloquence to tempt,
A Seraph's truth to vouch for your prediction,
That I would yield my bosom to disgrace,
Cancel the vow which I have given Edwina,
And save my country at my soul's expence.

Har. Then know, obdurate——

Edg. What?

Har. My country calls; [*Trumpets sound a charge.*
 'Tis her last awful invocation; hark!
 The altar burns; a royal lady waits,
 And this her bridal dower: receive it, prince:

[*He tenders the Crown to Edgar.*

What can a king give more? What has a father
 More dear to offer than his only child?

Edg. Forbear; 'tis mockery when the soul is fixt.

Har. Then thou art lost—Oh yet preserve thy
 country!

Edg. My honour and my oath—

Har. Thy life—

Edg. My love.

Har. Die then! What ho! my guards. Strike
 off his head.

MATILDA enters hastily and interposes herself between
 EDGAR and the Guards, as they are advancing to seize
 him.

Mat. Strike off his head! By Him who made the
 heavens,

Whose great primæval interdiction cries
 Thro' all creation's round 'thou shalt not kill,'

I do adjure you stop! [*Guards fall back.*

Har. What phrensy moves thee?

Mat. Or spare him, or expect to see me fall
 And dash my desperate brains. Upon my knees,
 Father, I do beseech thee, grant him life.

Enter NORTHUMBERLAND, SIFFRIC, and other Chiefs.

North. To horse, dread sir; brace on your beaver
strait,

Caparison with speed, and meet the sun,
Who thron'd and beaming on the upland edge,
Stands in his fiery wane with glowing wheels
And panting coursers to behold a scene,
Worth his diurnal round.

Har. Warriors, lead on!

Tho' hell assumes her thousand hideous shapes,
Phantoms and fiends and fierce anatomies
To shake me from my course; tho' Duncan cross me,
With auguries and spells, tho' this proud youth
Bid shap vexation with its wolfish fangs
Harrow my heart, in me is no delay.

For thee, my child, whose intercession turns
Yet once again from this devoted head
The uplifted hand of death, take, since thou wilt,
The thankless life, thou mak'st so much thy care;
And now farewell! *[Embracing Matilda.]*

Mat. The god of battle guide thee!
I will not shame thee with a tear: farewell!

Har. Come forth, bright sword; hence, nature,
from my heart:

Now take me, England; I am all thine own.

[Exit with his Train.]

Mat. Go, ye brave English; go, as ye are wont,
To glorious conquest! Oh remember, friends,
Ye strike for us, for freedom, for your country.

Angels of victory surround your host
And fight upon your side! Transporting sounds!

[*A distant shout.*

With joyful shoutings they salute their king,
And strike their shields in token of applause.

Edgar! [*Turning from the side scene to Edgar.*

Edg. Matilda! Arm me with a sword;
Or, like the Decii, self-devoted thus
I'll rush upon the foe.

Mat. Yet ere the shock
Of battle severs us perchance for ever,
Resolve me, had it been my lot to meet thee,
With free affections and a vacant heart,
Could'st thou have deign'd to cast away a thought
On lost Matilda? Ah, could'st thou have lov'd her?

Edg. Born to each grace, with every virtue blest!
How can Matilda ask of Edgar this?
Sure I were lost to every manly feeling,
If honour'd thus, I should forbear to hold,
Whilst memory lives, thy image present here,
And cherish it with gratitude, with love!

Mat. It is enough: Hear, angels, and record it!
Now take this sword; if in yon bleeding ranks
You meet the king, or fainting with his wounds,
Or press'd with numbers, think he had a daughter,
And save her father, as she rescued thee.

[*Matilda is going.*

Edg. Ev'n to the teeth of death I will obey thee.
Yet stay! one word—'Tis to exact from virtue
More than frail nature warrants; yet thy soul
Is large? Oh say, wilt thou protect Edwina?

Mat. Whilst I have life.

Edg. Then thou art truly great.

Mat. What! know'st thou not Edwina is my guest?

Edg. Edwina here! thy guest!

Mat. One tent contains us:

Beneath a borrow'd name (oh let the truth

Henceforth be sacred!) she besought protection;

I took her, laid her nearest to my heart,

And fed her with its best, its dearest hopes——

But hark! the battle joins—Farewel for ever! [*Exit.*

A general Charge.

Edg. Live, live and save Edwina! Hark, they shout!

There's victory in the sound. O day and night!

They stop, they turn. Behold, the Normans fly;

I see bright glory flaming in the van;

Tiptoe she stands in skiey-tinctur'd stile,

Her head high-rear'd and pointing to the skies,

With pinions bent for flight: Stay, godlike vision,

And let me fly to snatch——Edwina!

Enter EDWINA.

[*As he is hastening out Edwina meets him.*]

Edw. Edgar!

And do we live to meet? Oh, snatch the moment,

And save thyself and me! Whence this impatience?

Why that disorder'd rolling of thine eye?

What ails thee, Prince?

Edg. And can'st thou ask?—Behold!

Edw. O horrible! a scene of death——

Edg. Of glory!

Of fame immortal, of triumphant rapture——
And wouldst thou hold me here ?

[She takes hold of his hand.]

Edw. Wilt thou forsake me ?

Edg. Let go my hand : if you persist, Edwina,
To hold me thus, a thousand, thousand furies,
And each more horrible than death shall haunt me,
'Till phrensy-struck, with mine own hand I seize
This recreant heart and pluck it from my breast.

Enter EDWIN hastily.

Ed. Thus art thou found ? Thro' deluges of blood,
Launch'd from the noblest veins in all this isle,
Fighting I sought thee : Fly, ill-fated prince——

Edg. What do I hear ? Is it not victory ?

Ed. Curse on the strumpet Fortune, she revolts
And sides with Normandy ; their seeming flight
Was but a feint ; upon the word they halted,
Check'd in their mid-career ; then wheeling swift
With thick-clos'd files charg'd our disorder'd ranks,
That reel'd upon the shock : A faithless band,
Led by Earl Waltheof, that still veering traitor,
Went over to the foe.

Edg. Lives Harold yet ?

Ed. From helmet to the heel all red with blood,
And gash'd with glorious wounds, he call'd me to him,
And bade me say, that with his dying breath
To thee and to Matilda he bequeaths
All that is left of England.

Edg. Lead me to him !

Edw. To death as soon !

Ed. Retire to safer ground.

Edg. Retire ! shall Edgar fly, whilst Harold fights ?
 Off, let me go.

Edw. Nay, if my arms can't hold thee——

Edg. O thou soft Syren !—take her noble Edwin,
 Take my soul's better part before I sink
 To infamy—Oh, take her from my heart. [*Exit.*

Edw. If thou hast love or pity in thy bosom,
 Hasten and preserve him ! [*Exit Edwin.*

Oh, this rives my heart.

Earth, earth, receive a wretch.

[She falls on the ground.]

Enter MATILDA with Attendants, having discovered EDWINA on the Ground, she advances hastily to her.

Mat. She faints : she falls !

Look up, Edwina ! Is it death's resemblance,
 Or death itself ? She lives. Help me to raise her.

[They raise her.]

Edw. Matilda !

Mat. Start not ! I am yet thy friend.

Edw. Fly then and save——O Heaven !

Mat. Thy Edgar——No.

I saw your hero dart into the fight

As the train'd swimmer springs into the flood.

Edw. Art thou a woman ?

Mat. Would to Heaven I were not !

Then I had grappled on your warrior's side

And struck for England, for my father—Oh !

I look'd but now, and saw a storm of blood,
A raging ocean scatter'd o'er with wrecks :
Fir'd at the sight I snatch'd a javelin up
Some warrior's haste had dropt—the feeble weapon
Fell from my woman's hand : Again I look'd,
No English banner floated in the air,
Ave where my father fought ; revolting nature
Shrunk from the scene, and soon a scalding flood
Of tears burst forth that quench'd these orbs of sight.

Edw. Where shall I turn ?

Mat. To death.

Edw. Dreadful resort !

Mat. And yet when hope, our last kind nursing
friend,

Forsakes her patient's couch, and dark despair
Puts out that light, which like a nightly beacon
Points to the harbour, where the foundering bark
Of misery may steer. Ah, whether then
Shall life's benighted passenger resort,
But to oblivion and th' all-covering grave ?

Edw. Why then, when death had arm'd my uplifted
hand,

Didst thou prevent the blow and bid me live ?

Mat. Live but till Edgar falls, then rear the blow,
I'll not prevent it—Hah ! what bleeding man !

Enter NORTHUMBERLAND supported by Soldiers.

North. A little onward yet—Enough, enough !
Good fellow, hold thy kerchief to my side.
Run one of you and bring me speedy word,

What troops those are, which wilfully maintain
A dying kind of combat; if there's hope
Make signal with your hand and shout—staunch,
 staunch my wound—

My curse upon that Norman boar Fitz Hugh ;
His task has ript my heart-strings ; yet I cleft him,
Did I not, soldiers ?—Soft, for mercy's sake.

Jesu Maria, what a pang was that!

Look out; no sign of hope? — None, none; all's lost —
Hence, stand off, [*He smites his breast with anguish and
breaks from the soldiers.*]

Wide as the grave I rend this bleeding breach.

[He tears open his wound.

Fall England! fall Northumberland!—'Tis past.

[He falls into his soldiers arms and expires.

Mat. Farewell, stout heart! how better thus to fall
By death hewn down, than to outlive the leaf,
And drop a sapless ruin! let me view thee:
Is death no more than this? Why thou, Edwina,
Or I, or any one may do as much.

Life, like a worn out garment, is cast off
And there's an end: I thank thee for the lesson,
'Twill stand me much in use—bear him away.

[The soldiers take off the body.

Enter EDGAR, EDWIN, and Soldiers.

He lives, he comes ! hence to the winds, my fears ;
There's blood upon thy scarf.

Edg. Then it was struck
From Norman veins.

Mat. Where is my father?

Edg. Ha! Edwin!

Ed. My lord.

Edg. The foe suspends pursuit,
And calls his conquering legions back from slaughter :
Run, Edwin, run and take this ensign with thee ;
Here on the craggy summit of the cliff
Wave it aloft, and call the stragglers up
To form upon the heights ; these still are ours.

[*Exit Ed.*

Mat. Where is my father ? Where are all the heroes,
Whom I have seen return triumphant home,
With victory eagle-wing'd upon their helm ?

Edg. All lost, with thousands upon thousands sunk
And swallow'd up in death ?

Mat. Death, say'st thou ?

Edg. Hearken !

The hireling troops had fled ; one native phalanx
Fatally brave yet stood ; there deep engulph'd
Within the Norman host I found thy father,
Mounted like Mars upon a pile of slain :
Frowning he fought, and wore his helmet up,
His batter'd harness at each ghastly sluice
Streaming with blood ; life gush'd at every vein,
Yet liv'd he, as in proud despatch of nature,
His mighty soul unwilling to forsake
It's princely dwelling ; swift as thought I flew ;
And as a sturdy churl his pole-axe aim'd
Full at the hero's crest, I sprung upon him
And sheath'd my rapier in the catiff's throat.

Mat. Didst thou? then thou art faithful. Open wide

And shower your blessings on his heads, ye heavens!

Edg. A while the fainting hero we upheld;
(For Edwin now had join'd me) but as well
We might have driven the mountain cataract
Back to it's source, as stemm'd the battle's tide.
I saw the imperial Duke, and with loud insults
Provok'd him to the combat, but in vain;
The purse-braggart now secure of conquest
Rein'd in his steed, and wing'd his squadron round
To cut us from retreat; cold death had stopt
Thy father's heart, e'en hope itself had died:
'Midst showers of darts we bore him from the field,
And now, supported on his soldiers pikes,
The venerable ruin comes. Behold!

[The body of Harold is brought in.]

Mat. Soldiers, for this last mournful office thanks!
Bear him within the tent, upon the couch
Lay ye the body, spread his mantle o'er him,
And all depart: For this I thank you, Nature,
That when you sent calamity on earth,
And bade it walk o'er all this vale of tears,
You sent deliverance also, and with death,
As with a land-mark, bounded its domain,
And open'd an asylum in the grave.

[The body is carried into the tent, Matilda follows.]

Edw. Lo! where she follows her dead father's body:
She hath a soul that will not bend to grief
And disappointment.

Edg. Haste, beloved maid,
And force her from the body—

[*Exit Edw.*]

Enter SIFFRIC.

Sif. And dost thou live; brave youth; dost thou
survive

Those miracles of valour which I saw,
And blushing saw? for oh, too sure I wrong'd thee;
Give me thy pardon; thou hast more than conquer'd.

Edg. Siffric, enough! It is not now a time
For English hands to strike at English hearts,
Else—but 'tis past—Where 's old Northumberland?
Where valiant Mercia? Ah! is't so with both?

[*Siffric makes signal of their death.*]

Re-enter EDWIN with Soldiers.

Welcome, brave Edwin! thou bring'st hope for
England.

Enter EDWINA from the Tent.

Edw. Horror on horror! when will death have end?
Some fiery dog-star reigns and deadly madness
Strides all below the moon. Scarce had they set
Their mournful burden down, when following quick
She rush'd into the tent, and raising up
Her father's mantle, statch'd one eager look;
Then with uplifted eyes and heaving sighs,
Seizing his sword with strong determin'd grasp
Plung'd it into her breast. Behold, she comes!

Enter MATILDA supported.

Mat. 'Tis done! the faithful point hath reach'd my
life,

And spoke it's errand fairly: Now, my soul,
Now speed thy wings, and fly.

Edw. O killing sight!

Edg. O deed of horror!

Mat. Hush; no more of that.

Think'st thou the Almighty's mercy shall not reach
To take affliction in? look well at me;
Of friends, crown, country, kindsmen father 'rest,
Love lorn, of reason more than half beguil'd,
Heart-broke and struck from out the book of hope,
What could I do but die?

Edg. Heaven's joys receive thee!

Mat. Amen! the voice is Edgar's, but my eyes
Grow dim, alas, 'tis hard I cannot see thee:
Give me the crown; quick, reach it to my hand.

[They bring the crown and present it to Matilda.]

Ay, now I have it, shorn of pow'r indeed,
But light'ned of its cares; Edgar, o'er thee
This radiant circle like a cloud may pass,
But thy posterity to latest times
Shall bind it on their brow. Receive it, prince,
And noble as thou art, Oh, spare the dead.
Nor stir my father's ashes with thy curse!

[Edgar receives the Crown.]

Edg. Peace to his shade, so Heaven my sins forgive
As I thy father.

Mat. 'Tis enough : farewell !

Life's storm is past ; wave after wave subsides,
The turbid passions sink and all is peace :
Ambition, jealousy, nay love itself,
Last ling'ring, drops into the grave and dies.

[She sinks into the arms of her Attendants and expires.]

Edg. There fled a mighty soul—Angels, receive it,
And waft it to the mansions of the blest !—

And art thou mine ?—— *[To the Crown.]*

Friends, soldiers—subjects now,
Lord Edwin, Siffric, England's brave remains,
I, Edgar Atheling, king Edmund's heir,
Now take this mournful relique of my right.
If you are with me, warriors, strike your shields.

Thanks, gallant countrymen ! *[They strike:]*

Ed. Lo, on his knee

Edwin salutes thee ; king of England, hail !

Edg. Come to my heart, my friend, my more than
father ! *[To Edwin.]*

Sif. Siffric, the convert of thy valour, kneels,
And every faculty of head, heart, hand,
To thy free service dedicates.

Edg. Arise !

And take ('tis all your king can give) my thanks.
And now, my fair betroth'd, reach forth thine hand,]
And touch this golden symbol, whilst I swear,
Here standing in the awful eye of Heaven,
To share it with Edwina.

Edw. On my knees

I yield thee thanks, whilst before Heaven I swear,
Tho' thou hadst nothing to bestow but chains

And beggary and want and torturing stripes
And dungeon darkness; still thy poor Edwina
For thee alone shall live, with thee shall die.

Edg. Now, warriors, how resolve you? View that
field;

The Norman, like a lion, swill'd with slaughter,
Sleeps o'er his bloody mess—our scatter'd troops
Collect and form around.

Sif. We live in Edgar;
Save the last hope of England and retreat.

Edg. Retreat! shall English warriors hear that word
And from an English king! No, Siffric, never.
Unfurl the Saxon standard! See, my lords,
Twice taken in the fight and twice recover'd,
Th' hereditary glory lives with Edgar.
Beneath that banner godlike Alfred conquer'd:
Beneath that banner, drench'd in Danish blood,
My grandsire Iron-sided Edmund fought;
Wrench'd from my infant grasp, a bold usurper
Seiz'd it, possess it, died in it's defence:
And shall I, in the tame respect of life,
With close furl'd ensigns, trailing in the dust,
Halt in the rear of fame? No, gallant English,
Turn not, but as the galled panther turns,
To lick his wounds, and with recruited fury
Spring to the fight afresh: So turn; so stand!
And from this height, ennobled by your valour,
Hurl bold defiance to the foe beneath. [*Drums, &c.*

Exeunt.

EPILOGUE.

SPOKEN BY MISS YOUNGE.

*FROM ancient Thespis to the present age
The world hath oft been term'd a public stage,
A thread-bare metaphor, which in its time
Hath patch'd much prose and heel-piec'd many a rhyme;
Eo'n the grave pulpit sometimes deigns to use
The emphatic terms of the proscribed Muse,
Calls birth our entry, death our exit calls,
And at life's close exclaims—the curtain falls;
And so concludes upon the drama's plan
That fretting, strutting, short-hour actor, man.*

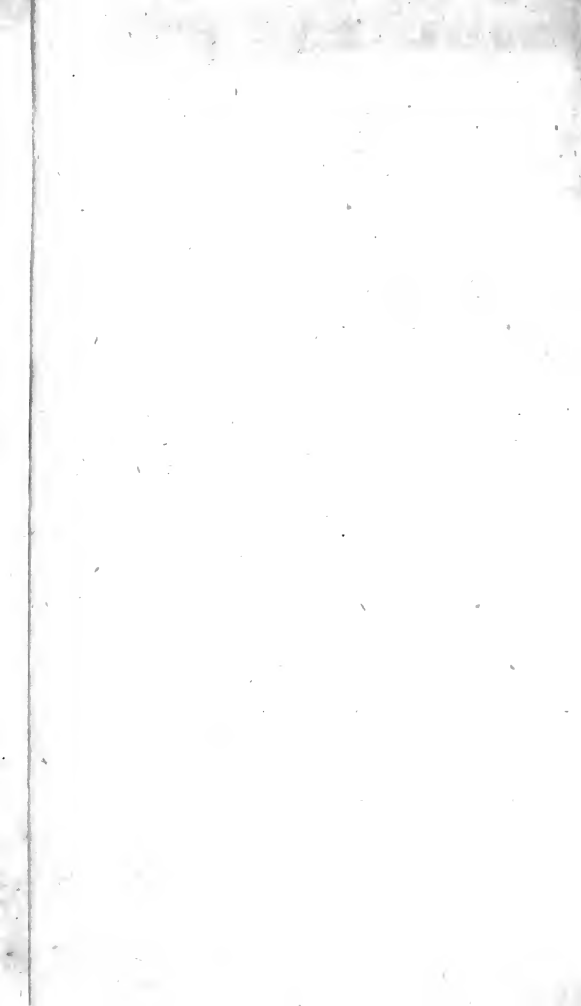
*Are we all actors then?—yes, all from Adam,
And actresses?—I apprehend so, madam.
Some fill their cast with grace, others with none;
Some are show'd off the stage, and some show'd on;
Some good, some bad, still we all act a part,
Whilst we disguise the language of the heart;
Nature's plain taste provides a simple treat,
But art, the cook, steps in and mars the meat;
The comic blade makes ridicule his test,
And on his tomb proclaims that life's a jest,
The swaggering braggart, in true tragic cast,
Bellows blank verse and daggers to the last;
Whilst clubs of neutral petit-maitres boast
A kind of opera company at most,*

*Whose dress, air, action, all is imitation,
A poor, insipid, servile, French translation;
Whose tame dull scene glides uniform along,
In comi—farcical—pastoral—sing—song—
'Till all awaken'd by the rattling die,
Club wits, and make—a modern tragedy;
A tragedy alas! good friends, look round,
What have we left to tread but tragic ground?
Four authors leagu'd to shake the human soul,
Unsheath the dagger, and infuse the bowl,
At length descending to the least, and last,
We hope the terror of the time is past,
Full sated now with battle, blood, and murder,
England is conquer'd—fate can reach no further,
Bid then the weeping Pleiads dry their eyes,
And turn to happier scenes and brighter skies.*













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